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MATTIE GREY

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To J. R. Clayton Esq.
With the Authors
very best regards

Aug. 28/75

POEMS.

Dalziel, George

MATTIE GREY

And other Poems.

BY

LONDON:
PRINTED FOR PRIVATE DISTRIBUTION.
1873.

LOAN STACK

PR 4525
D14 M3

TO

MARIANA,

WITH ALL TRUE LOVE,

I DEDICATE THIS BOOK,

IN MEMORY

OF MANY, MANY HAPPY YEARS.

937

Erratum.

Line 15, p. 33—

"Has been full dreary, wild, cold, and with frost,"

should read—

"Has been full dreary, wild, and cold, with frost"

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What is there in the light of day,
Or aught that does abound there,
Can drive each cankering care away,
If love is never found there?
One Farmer Grey,
If truth we say,
Had home and plenty near him,—
Yet one sweet bliss
Did sorely miss:
A loving wife to cheer him.

So he did wed a fair young lass,
As sweet and blythe as ony;
And then was born, as time did pass,
Their daughter, bright and bonny.
O Mattie Grey,
Run out and play,
Thy gold hair lightly streaming;
For there 's a care
That thou must share,
Of which thou 'rt little dreaming.

MATTIE GREY.

PART I.

When Farmer Grey, of Holt's Hall Grange, did die,
Oh, sad the weeping in that quiet home,
Albeit he left his barns well stored with grain,
And plenteous wealth of gold his coffers filled;
For Farmer Grey had been a thrifty man,
And well-to-do for many a day gone by;
Yet he did leave a mate and little lamb
To mourn for that that riches cannot buy,
A gap he left that friend can never fill,
A stricken heart that only time can heal.
The poor young wife now drooping all so sad,
She seemed to have no other joy in life
But that which centered in the one sweet pledge
Of her too short, but happy married life.

Then, as the Grange grew dull, the Widow Grey,
Unused to manage the rough daily round
Of irksome labour in a farmer's life,
Betook her straightway to a neighbouring town,
Where many well-tried friends and kindred dwelt,—
And there devoted her remaining days
To rear the darling, little Mattie Grey,
And tend her mental culture with such care
As only mother's yearning heart can give.

Sweet Mattie Grey! the light of mother's home!
She was a fairy child, with rosy cheeks;
Her eyes were bright, and like the heavens, blue;
Her waving hair like streaming threads of gold;
Her smile was winning, sweet; and then her laugh—
It rang like merry music through the air.

Alas! Time stays not with the children's hour,
Nor e'en with joyous youth, nor manhood's prime,—
Nor will it touch with soft or gentle hand
Declining years; but brings with rapid step
The little pattering feet of playful child
O'er the rough moor of life to tottering age,
On wings that fly so very fast, that we
Do stand aghast to find a whole life gone

Ere half our busy thoughts have taken form—
Ere half our busy plans have been fulfilled.

Ere Mattie Grey had touched her eighteenth year,
A simple maiden in her tender teens!
Just blushing into early womanhood,
All lithe and graceful in her beauteous youth;
Her soft blue eyes, so dreamy in repose,
Would sparkle with a sudden light of joy
If any joyous word fell on her ear;
But in their deepest depths there dwelt a fire,
That blazed with a heroic light at tale
Of daring deeds, or acts of manly worth,
Or high and noble enterprise, which held
Its course, to elevate the social rank
Of those whose feet had slipped upon the way,
In journeying over this world's rugged path,—
Or carry on some glorious work for GOD.
And she could fire with indignation, too,
At acts unworthy, or oppression hard;
For in her pure young heart there lived enthroned
The very soul of truth, of honour, and
Of love; and she would weep at tales of woe,
Great bitter tears, and fly to succour those
Who felt the heavy hand of sore distress.

At this glad, joyous season of her life,
She won a worthy lover to her side:
A good, brave youth, a neighbouring farmer's son,
Whose prospects in the world were passing fair,
But yet requiring diligence and thrift,
And promised, with the help of steady toil,
To place him well, if not among the rich,
Yet in such easy circumstance that he
Might well provide a comfortable home
For wife or children, and himself might look
For an old age of competence and rest.
The ample wealth that Mattie's mother held
Was never counted in their worldly plans;
Frank Luton only thought what he could win
To give his wife a social place as high,
A home as bright and cosily arrayed,
As any of their many friends' around.

But ere he settled to the steady life,
It was his wish to move into the world,
And range awhile amid those far-off lands
Whose wonders he had learned in oft-conn'd books,
And Yuletide stories told by travelling men;
And now his very soul was roused to roam,
To leave the quiet pastures he had known
From early infant days till now, and take

An active part in schemes of hardier life,
Or snatch bright treasures from the rocky bed
Of a wild gurgling river, or amongst
The sparkling pebbles on its golden shore.

And he must sail away across the sea—
Far, far away—and find out strange adventures:
He would not long remain; he could not stay
Away for many months from darling Mattie,—
'T was but a burst, which soon should have an end.
He 'd then return to spend a happy life
With her, the sweetest girl the world e'er knew.
And in his heart he felt the golden truth,
And in her ear he poured the honied words.
Come sunshine or come cloud across their path,
Come adverse fortune, or come golden days,
Together, or for some short time apart,
They ever still must live a life of love
Pure and unsullied, to each other true.

Then oft he pleaded, and with passion urged,
That Mattie should companion be to him
In all his wanderings by the sea or land;
But Mattie would not! No, she would not go!
She loved him very dear,—her whole pure heart,

And all her dreams, and fondest hopes of joy
Were centred in that love, which nought could change.
She felt, nor ever doubted, that his love
Was just as high, and pure, and true for her;
Yet would not go—she could not if she would.
When once she, wavering for a moment, paused:
Should she go with him—her love?—could she go?
Had she not plighted unto him her troth,
And he to her? Did she not truly love
Him dearer far than very life itself?
Should she go with him?—could she go?—No, no!
Oh! when he went away, her very heart
Would wend with him through all lands to the end,
And pray that all good angels guard his way;
But she herself must stay, and never leave
That dear good mother, to whose tender care
She owed each comfort of her daily life.
And 't was her first great duty to remain,
To tend and comfort the declining years,
And, in some sense, to give a meet return
For all the joy the mother's love bestowed.
But she would try once more to turn his thoughts
Away from wandering o'er the stranger world,—
To settle down in quiet peace to live
A life of love and usefulness at home;
And should he still resolve to wander forth,

Then she must patient wait for his return,
And secret weep, and wish him home again.

Young, tender Mattie Grey! how should she know
Or understand the strength of that strange power,
Or see the wisdom that has thought it well
To stir within the human heart a pulse
Of life that ever throbs, and stirs the soul
To yearning for some undefinèd thing,—
A longing, eager wish for something more
Than that which comes within its ready grasp?
How strange and how mysterious is the power
That stirs this restless spirit of man's life!
Which makes him fret and long for change of scene,
For stirring incident, through which perchance
He must brave peril at the risk of limb,
Or even at the risk of life itself;
And when we question close, and try if we
Can understand this mighty force, we lift
The hat, well pleased, to these brave, noble men,
These self-denying heroes of the age;
For some will leave the fondest ties of home,
Where each odd nook and corner of the house,
The neighbouring fields, and eke the garden round,
Where every tree and every flowering shrub—
Nay, almost every blossom as it blows—

Has some peculiar interest to the eye,
Connected with some little history
Of life, some memory that will never die.
But in long-after years, when the great fight
Of life in the busy world is well-nigh done,
And he shall rest, a placid looker-on
At the oft-shifting fortunes of the day,—
The recollection of this far-off time
Will bear the pleasing charm of wild romance,
And rouse the sluggish current of his blood
To quicker action, as he ponders o'er
The dreamy thought of days when he was young.
Yet men will leave all this, and very much
That 's good and joyous to the human heart
Besides, to seek in far untrodden lands
Adventures strange, and e'en such hair-breadth 'scapes
As make the blood to tingle with alarm:
Some to explore the unknown parts of earth,
And tell the list'ning world of regions vast—
Of mighty lakes and lofty mountain range—
Of peoples strange and wild, that live afar
In lands remote, and little know, or reck
Of any land on earth besides their own.

And some, with wayward feet, will take their course
To arctic regions, where great mountain piles

Of solid ice stand where the sea should flow,
And endless snows lie thick upon the land—
Where Winter bleak and bitter frost shall hold
Nigh undisputed sway the whole year round;
Where short-lived Summer flickers for a day,
Scarce long enough to thaw the frozen sea,
Or light the native darkness of the land.
And, as the child of poverty, that lies
Half clad and shivering in the Winter night,
May dream he feels a mother's tender kiss—
The kind warm lips soft prest upon his own—
Sending a ray of warmth through all his frame,
Then only wakes to find "'t was but a dream!"—
The poor dull children of these frozen climes
Do see the light of Summer come and go,
Like the faint flicker of a dying flame.

And some will scale the lofty Alpine range,
Where snows of thousand, thousand years lie piled
And crusted o'er and o'er, and o'er again.—
And some will wander o'er the sandy steppes
That stretch beneath the burning Southern sun,
Where, in that time of year, when showers descend,
These flats are all a treacherous, reeking swamp,
With vegetation teeming from each pore,
And savage beasts of various kinds are found,

With countless herds of cattle browsing there.
But when the blazing sun darts furious heat,
These swamps become an arid waste of sand—
A great weird, treeless plain, where the wild wind
With fury blows, and whirls the sand on high
In mighty columns, ranged in rows along,
Like vapoury mansions resting in the air;
Or rushing with a mighty sound, e'en like
A giant waterspout upon the sea;
Or, as a darkening cloud, it closes round,
Filling all the air with hot, stifling sand,
That buries there, beneath a burning shroud,
The savage tiger and the lowing herd;
And often, sad to tell! the brave, bold men,
Who, lion-hearted, seek, in these far climes,
Rare knowledge, that the world may wiser be.

All this strange love of wild adventurous change
Doth puzzle those who sit in ease at home.
Yet, is it not a grand, a gallant thing,
That man of noble mind should find his way—
Out into new, wild parts of the strange world,
And gather up rare knowledge, that may help
To guide his fellow-man in coming time,
And make the many nations of our race
Familiar with each other's wants and ways?

Now Mattie's lover had no worldly need
That he should seek for wealth in foreign lands,
Or greater comfort than he had at home.
His father's house, where he himself was born,
Was large and fair to view, with grassy slopes
Stretching on to the margin of a brook,
The silvery waters sparkling as they ran
Through the green meadow, where each flower and tree
Was mirrored in the merry face so clear,
Making its beauty still more beautiful.
Tall trees did grow, and stretch their ponderous limbs,
With heavy foliage clad, across the sky,
Entwining oft in such rich tracery,
Their lofty grandeur lent a pleasing charm
And grateful shelter to the neighbouring lands.

His home was happy as the heart could wish.
He by his neighbours and his friends around
Was held in high respect for manly worth,
For wisdom, and great singleness of heart.
In country sports and bold athletic games
He held a foremost place, and in the field
Would clear a fence, or follow up the hounds
With any well-bred sportsman of the day.
But far beyond these little glories told,
Which flattering for a time, are soon forgot,

He held a prize—the dearest prize on earth—
And that for which there is nought in the world
To fill its place: it stands supreme—alone!—
The pure, undying, warm love of a true
True woman's heart!—that gem of gems, the glory
And choicest jewel in a kingly crown.
He held, as all his very own indeed,
That priceless, peerless gem—the loving heart
Of gentle Mattie Grey!

Yet this pure gem—
This pearl of priceless worth—did he resolve
To cast, with other lesser gems, aside,
And try if he by any chance could find
Wherewith to gild and glorify the same,
When he should come to pick it up again.

'T was when the days were long, and soft, and warm—
The corn was changing from its green to gold,
And all the air was laden with perfume
Of fruits and flowers of varied kind and hue;
When bounteous Nature was preparing well
To pour her choice abundance in the lap
Of hungry man—these two fond lovers met,
As was their wont, upon the Sabbath eve:
They met to walk, to talk, and whisper love,

And tell again those sweet delicious words
Which they had said again, and oft again,
Yet felt it far the sweetest thing in life
To meet and say them ever o'er and o'er.

And thus they walked on through the quiet town,
Across the waving corn-field, to the lane
That led them to the margin of a brook,—
There sat them down : her small soft hand did lie
Close clinging to his willing arm. This was
The time that Mattie, in her wisdom, chose
To urge again her plan that he would stay,
And give up, now and aye, the wandering thought,
Nor dream of leaving all his kindred, friends,
And e'en herself: her trembling heart would break,
"That, she was very sure, if he did go!"

Then hard he pleaded they should both go forth
To see the world, and brave it hand in hand.
"Oh, no! no! that can never be!—and well
You know the reason why it cannot be."
He did not see or fully recognize
The reason that she gave, and thought so strong.
Long time they talked : she pleading—he resisting ;
Then followed words that bore reproachful tone ;

Then bitter words that lovers ne'er should speak,
And those who tell a love-tale ne'er record.

That night sweet Mattie reached her mother's home
With wounded heart, and very, very sad;
Her lips compressed; her large, bright eyes all full
Of blazing light.

But nought she spoke, beyond
The words that child-like love did prompt to say:
Yet, with "Good night!" she gave a closer kiss—
And closer pressed her to the mother's breast;
With stifled sigh, she straightway sought her bed—
But not to sleep, poor wounded lamb! her bosom
Now almost bursting with her new born grief,—
And she was glad that friendly darkness there,
Did spread its sheltering mantle round her bed;
That she might weep her bitter tears unseen.

And when the first bright rays of sunny morn
Sent forth their gladdening light, to fill her chamber,
With the glory of their love—oh! sad to see,—
There Mattie Grey upon her snow-white bed
Did lie, her dreamy eyes all swollen, red
With tears; poor maid! nor had kind soothing sleep

One moment all that night e'er rested on
The pillow where she lay.

And at this hour,
This very touch of time, the while she lay
Upon her bed so sad, her lover went
With steady step, and staff in hand, away,
Along the road that led to London town,
Nor ever looked behind; and yet full sad
And heavy was his heart, that he must leave
So many friends and kindred that he loved,
And most of all sweet blue-eyed Mattie Grey.
She was the very darling of his heart,—
And, but for those cold words which neither meant,
Yet both had said, and in their foolish pride
Would not unsay, he felt it would have cost
An effort stronger than he might have made,
To fly the spell her charms had o'er him thrown.

Then Mattie wept and mourned her lover gone,
And in the gushing fulness of her heart,
Did vow herself alone to blame, in all
The unkind words that they in haste had said,
And in the moment's anger felt were true;
And now with her poor heart so sore, she thought
'T would be a little thing, and gladly done,

To give up half her future life, could she
Unsay the words, and bring him back again.

Then for a time she little went abroad,
And shunned observance in the public way;
But time wore on, and with its kindly hand
Did soothe the anguish of her sudden grief,
And left her calm, resignèd to her lot.

And as the days and months flew quickly on,
There other lovers came; for Mattie Grey,
Though sad, and little given now to joy,
Was yet a maid with soft and rosy cheek,
With eye that could light up with sparkling fire,
And still the cherry lips looked tempting red;
And young men, prosperous in the busy world,
Did, more than one, beseech that she would give
An ear unto their tender suit of love.
But Mattie would not listen to their words:
She had no eyes to see their goodly looks,
She had no ear to hear their honied speech,
For eyes and ears were dull and dead to all
That lovers ever care to see or hear.
No other form her memory's eye could see,
But that loved form she parted with in scorn;
No other words of love her ear could hear,

For his love-words, her memory ever told,
Were words the fondest, sweetest sounds of all.
And only once a letter came from him ;—
Ah, Mattie ! with what tender little hands
She took and pressed it to her throbbing heart ;
Then hastening to her chamber, all alone,
She kissed, and pressed, and kissed it o'er again,
E'en as a mother in her teens will kiss
And press and fondle with her first-born babe,—
Ere she did break the seal to read its words.
And these told many longings of regret
That Fate had parted for a time their course,
And begged her to forget the angry words
He uttered at their parting, and forgive
In him what in himself he 'd ne'er forgive.
That still he loved her with the fondest love ;
She was the very light of life to him,
And should, through all his wandering in the world.
Be still his guide, his hope of future rest:
He would not long remain away from her:
Already did he miss her soft blue eyes,
That looked so tenderly into his own ;
He missed her silvery voice, and dear kind words,
Which he had treasured up within his heart,
As the one choice remembrance of his life,
And never could forget, so long as thought

Along the road-side way, and by the hedge
And open ditch that parted field from field;
And all the land, as far as eye could see,
Was covered o'er with heavy heaps of snow;
And every spreading branch on every tree,
E'en every little twig, did bear its weight
Of silvery crust that glistened in the light.

'T was when this winter day was nearly done,—
The sun was sinking to its misty bed,
And the dull gloom of falling night had now
Begun to spread its mantle o'er the land,—
A stranger man, footsore, and fighting hard
With the bitter, blinding storm, came toiling on
Down the steep hill, the roadway to the town:
He cowered and bent beneath the driving snow,
For he was long years past his manhood's prime—
And grizzled grey his beard and scanty locks,
And weather-stained the garments that he wore.

Now, as he neared the quiet cottage home
Where Mattie Grey until that hour had lived.
The passing-bell rang from the old church tower
And smote his ear with sad and solemn sound,
And sent a sudden chill, he knew not why,
Through all his blood—a chill more damp and cold

Than e'en the bitter Winter blast that blew.
Shivering through all his frame, awhile he stood
Beside the cottage door which he had known
Full well in early years, now long gone by.
And there it stood securely, as of old,
Nigh covered o'er with many climbing stems:
The honeysuckle and the thorny briar,
The rose shrub twining with clematis sweet,
Up o'er the porch and round the grey stone walls,
And these, when decked with Summer leaf and flowers,
Had made the little house stand like a gem
Of joy and rosy gladness in the midst
Of lofty well-grown trees with foliage clad,
That stretched their ponderous arms out far around,
Sheltering the cosy nest on every side
When rough, wild tempest blew across the land.
Now all was clad in deep mid-winter snow,—
The wind moaned sadly through the leafless trees,
And the snug cottage gave no welcome sign
Of light or life to cheer the traveller on;
For, save one glimmer in an upper room,
The little house stood dull, and dark, and sad.
He, sudden turned away—he knew not why;—
There seemed a sense of fear upon his heart,
Albeit his heart was little prone to fear,—
And hastened to a humble tavern nigh,

Where blazing fire and smiling host did warm
And cheer the weary traveller's drooping heart,
And banish thought of stormy winds without.

Then, as the night wore on, stray guests came in
To smoke their pipes, and drink their can of beer,
To gossip over matters in their ken—
And matters far beyond their ken, as well.
Thus friendly chat beguiled the passing hour,
And, in a pause, the stranger traveller asked
"If any here could tell where Widow Grey
Did dwell?"

And one repeated, "Widow Grey?"
"Ay, the good widow of old Farmer Grey.
He held some land about the Holt's Hall Grange;
And when the old man died, his widow came
To live here in this town—'t is years ago!"
Then added, with a trembling in his voice,
"She had a daughter—a sunny, blue-eyed girl.
Is any here can tell me where she lives?"

"Ay! ay! I know," the other speaker said.
"But, bless your heart! the poor old Widow Grey—
Why, she 's been dead and gone these—let me see!—
These thirty years and more!"

"No! no!" cried out
Another guest, "it 's nothing like so long.
Why, bless thee, man! I 'll here be bold to say
It 's twenty years, and not a day beyond."

Then rose discussion as to dates, and each
Was positive upon the ground he took,
And with sage circumstance confirmed his word;
As, when a neighbour's farm was up for sale;
Or, when another's cow brought forth three calves,
And one, forsooth, had neither ears nor tail;
Or, when the lightning struck the old church tower—
The same year that the new Town Hall was built.
And each man had a different day to name,
Until a firm voice silenced all the rest.

"Just look you here!" said he who first had spoke,
"Old Widow Grey died in that heavy year
When, as it seemed, full half the town did die.
'T was in the first year that the cholera came.
Why, man!" he cried, striking his heavy hand
Upon the hard oak table with a thud,
"I 'm right! It 's five and twenty years since then.—
And, sir," he, to the stranger turning, said,
"As you, to know about the widow, ask,
Perhaps 't may interest you if I tell

Likewise about the daughter you have named?"
The traveller only nodded his assent,
And, without pause, the speaker thus went on:
"But truly, sir, it 's little I 've to tell.
Ah, dear and good, sweet, kind Miss Mattie Grey!
A gentle soul as ever lived, say I.
Why, look! there 's not a man or woman here
In all this town that has not a good word
For that kind patient soul; and I will say—
I hope with reverence, too—that if an angel
E'er lived on earth, then Mattie Grey was one.
God bless her now!—'t is but an hour ago
I heard the passing-bell ring out for her!"

Here now a short, uneasy silence fell
Upon the little group: the men smoked on,
And each one, staring out before him straight,
Looked out with a half-wise, half-saddened air;
Until the stranger, with a vacant gaze
And moistening eye, low sighing, murmured out—
"And so she 's dead! and so she 's dead!"

"Well—yes!
You see, sir," said the man, settling his chin
Into the ample folds of his cravat,
Like one who had made up his mind to have

The talking to himself, and tell a tale
He loved to tell, knowing he told it well ;
The other guests were mute, save with a nod
They gave approval as the tale went on ;
The stranger, listening with a thirsty ear,
Drank eagerly each word that fell.

"This, sir,
You see, is just the simple way it came
About, as every man that 's here can tell
As well as I. I knew the good old dame
When she was but a girl, with rosy cheeks,
And such an eye as set full half the lads
Nigh daft with very love ; and I will own
That after young Ned Luton went away,
I had a sneaking kindness for the girl
Myself—I say so now, and there 's no shame—
Although I never said as much before ;"—
The stranger gave a short uneasy shrug,—
" It may seem strange, from my low lot in life,
That I should ever dare to look so high ;
For she was rich, and I was always poor—
Though, at that time, a good deal better off
Than now. For, you must know, my fortunes changed
When the old man died, and left me to fight
The battle his misfortunes had brought on.

"Well, somehow we were brought together then,
And I was conquered by her large blue eyes,
And gentle kindly words, which made me think
That she might love me too; and when we're young,
You see, we do such things in warmth of blood
That make us wonder, in our later years,
How ever we had dared to be so bold."

The stranger muttered something 'tween his teeth,
As o'er his weather-beaten face there spread
An angry flush; yet nothing said aloud.
The speaker, marking not, told on his tale:

"It's many years have gone away since then;
My memory may be wrong—but I do think
I asked her to the church with me. But, no:
Not she!—and I was not the only one
She did refuse the same. We all do know—
At least, I do—how Farmer Stanton's lad—
His eldest son, young Harry, I remember—
Did want her for his wife; a right good match
Would it have been for her, poor girl! I say,
And she'd have had her coach to ride in too,
For many a year gone by, poor dear good soul!
Not that that would have mattered much to her;
For she had wealth enough to keep a carriage

Of her own, only that she spent her money
In another, and I think, a better way.
Now, this young Stanton, you must know, was lucky
In some new-fangled plans he had for farming,
And always had the biggest, fattest crops
Of any farmer round about us here,
And made a great big heap of shining gold;
I cannot say how much; but this I can,
And so can you, Tom Graham, for you have been
About his house, as well as working on
His land, that he has been a rare rich man
These many years; but would she have him?—no,
Not she!—she loved that chap, Ned Luton, far
Too well to ever think of other men;
And he away across the great salt sea.

"And they do say he never wrote a line
To her, to tell if he was dead or living.
There was a sort o' talk among us here,
That he had gone right off to London town,
Where he was pressed aboard a ship, and sent
To sea, and made a sailor, or, mayhap,
A soldier; who can tell? but which it was
It matters little now; but this, they tell,
He never wrote a line to Mattie Grey.

"They had a quarrel, I believe; but no one
Has ever known the rights about the matter;
For she, good soul, did never say a word,
Or murmur that the lad had done her wrong.
Nor do I think he's e'er been heard of since;
Certain, not in these later days, that ever
I could learn. Rumours went at times about
That he had been seen at the other side
O' the world somewhere, but nothing certain known,
And now it's only just we older folks
That know that such a man has ever lived,
Or had a place among the people here.
You see, sir, things do pass and change so quick
In this strange world of ours, I sometimes think
It just like the great, rolling, restless sea,
Lying out away beyond the marshes there,
Where wave comes following upon wave so quick,
And makes a murmur, or a louder noise,
Upon the glistening shore, then smoothly glides
Adown its bed back into the great sea,
Leaving, mayhap, a little tumbled heap
Of sea-weed, or of rougher shingle stone,
To tell to those who care about such things,
That one wave, so much stronger than the rest,
Had been and left its mark upon the sand;
And what of that? Why, sir, the next strong tide

Sends a great wave up higher still, and sweeps
Away the little mark the former made."

"True, true," the stranger said; "much that is good
Is soon forgotten 'mid the whirl of life;
And while we fight the battle, which we all
Must do, it is not always he that strives
The most, or most deserves, that wins the prize
Bestowed. But—will you pardon me?—you spoke
Of Widow Grey, and of her daughter, friend.
Now can you tell me more about their lives?
For I have met with those that knew them well,
And what you say but makes me wish for more."

"Well, yes; I think I can. There is not much
To tell, but what there is, I think I know
As well as any man about the town.
Well, then, you see, sir, when the good old lady,
The Widow Grey, was taken from the world,
Miss Mattie moved away from the old house
In the High Street, and bought that rosy cottage,
The last house in the town. It stands with front
That looks right up the London Road; and there,
I have been told, she used to sit and watch
Each passing traveller that came towards
Her house; and for the poor wayfaring man

Her door was open, and her table spread,
Ay! and her ready purse was open too;
For she was ever foremost with her alms,
As with her kindly word, for those in need.
And many hungry creatures did she feed,
And many hungry souls she fed as well.
Wherever want or woe was found, there too
Was found Miss Mattie Grey; and everywhere
Appeared her kindly act in meat or meal,
Or wrappers warm, against the Winter's cold.
And many a nurse she hired, and often too
A doctor paid to tend the sick and poor,
That they should lack for neither food nor aid;
And while she helped with every creature care,
She whispered in the ear a word of hope,
Of love and comfort to the dying soul.

"And as she went on down the quiet street,
Whether on house affairs, or gentle errand
To visit some sad suffering fellow-soul,
Or, on the Sabbath morning, on her way
To church,—a duty which she never failed
To do,—she had a kindly smile or word
For all; and every little child would run
To meet, and greet her with its rustic bow,
Or curtsey, and to hear her gentle voice;

For all were proud and pleased to say that they
Had won a smile or word of kindly praise
From good Miss Mattie Grey.

"And so she lived,
And spent the time in trying, to her best,
To help and comfort those who were not blessed
With this world's wealth; and wealth, I do believe,
Was never placed in better hands to spend.
And many here will feel that her good life
Was finished all too soon; but so it is,
And we must bear these things as best we may.
If I guess right, from your appearance, sir,
That you 're a stranger to these parts of ours,
Then chance you may not know, the Winter here
Has been full dreary, wild, cold, and with frost,
And snow in such great storms, as I believe
Are seldom ever known in these flat lands.
'T is just about a month ago, not more,
When good Miss Grey was walking down the road,
She trod upon a piece of ice, and fell,
And hurt herself, they tell me, very sore;
And from that day did never leave her bed.

"Her sufferings with a gentle grace she bore,
And never murmured in her sorest pain,
But bowed her head and heart, and meekly said,

'It is the LORD's will that I suffer *now*.'
And this short time of her fast-ebbing life
Was passed upon a bed which had been placed
To face the window looking up the road,
As I have said, that led to London town.
There did she lie, and for the last few days
Half-conscious only what was done or said.
At length her last day came. All bleak and cold,
The snow had fallen heavy in the night,
And all the road, and all the land around,
Lay deeply covered o'er, as you, mayhap,
From having travelled to this town, may know.
She lay for hours, and scarcely seemed to breathe,
Except when any sound fell on her ear,—
Then would she look enquiringly around;
But last of all her glance went up the road,
And there did rest, until the heavy lids
Went softly down, to shield again from light
Those eyes that were as blue as the clear vault
Of heaven.

"She now had lain an hour or more,
Without a look or movement that could show
That she did live,—when, starting suddenly,
Rose right up in her bed, and, with a cry,
As much of pain as joy, did stretch her arms,

And with an eager look and beaming eyes,
That, with a moment's light of gladness, shone
As sunny as in days of youth, she cried,
While o'er her face a blush of beauty spread,
'See, see! there he is! there upon the road!
Oh, cruel snow! and cruel, bitter wind!
Come! Welcome! welcome, my own darling love!
Oh, welcome to my weary heart!' Then slowly
Sinking back on her pillow, she was gone—
Gone, gone to rest, while friends were left to weep.

"You see, sir, how I come to know these things
So well, is that my wife has been up there
About the house, a great part of her time,
Since that unhappy day of freezing cold
When good Miss Mattie Grey was carried home
So badly hurt that she could never mend;
And for the last few days, when all could see
That every hope of longer life was gone,
Why, she, I do believe, has not set foot
Within her own poor door. And so 't was right.
And many other kind true friends were there;
For good Miss Grey had friends as staunch and true
As any lady living in the land;
And if the wish of friends could lengthen days,
She would have lived for many years to come.

"Well, well! she's gone to take her pay for all
The holy labour she performed on earth;
And sorely she'll be missed by all the poor,
Yes, and by rich folks of the town as well.
The angel sure whose holy mission 't is
To chronicle the goodly deeds done here
On earth, that not one little act of love
Shall be forgotten, or allowed to lie
All covered over with the dust of time,—
Sure, as he speeds his way across the world,
He must have noted down her many acts,
And have a goodly well-filled book to show,
Of loving deeds and charities performed."

* * * * * *

The snow in heavy masses still lay deep
On all the ground, and all the air was dull
And laden with a cold grey frosty mist;
Then, as the short-lived day drew near its close,
The solemn burial bell rang out, to tell
That now the poor unconscious clay that once
Had been the mansion of a living soul,
Was being borne to that lone spot of earth
Where Fate had destined dust should turn to dust.
A few sad mourning friends stood round about,
With head uncovered and with saddened mien.

They heard the solemn words the preacher said,
And tears of bitter, unfeigned grief welled up
From many manly eyes, and women wept
And sobbed aloud with sorrow true, to know
That they had lost so kind and loved a friend.

Now, when they lowered the coffin to its rest,
And to the prayers was said the last "Amen,"—
When Sexton with his busy spade had done,
When mourning friends and those who came to look,
And all had gone upon their several ways,
A grey old man, but thinly clad, stood there,
Leaning for shelter 'gainst a neighbouring tree.

That night, when once again the cronies met
Around the cheerful fire, all blazing bright,
That shed a glow of welcome round the room
In this old kindly hostel by the way,
There talked they of the funeral they had seen,
And those who came to look into the grave;
And oft the man that told of Mattie Grey,
Would lay his pipe aside and ponder deep,
And marvel who that grey old man could be.

JESSICA.

PART I.

Of all the subtle feelings man can know,
Or strange emotions that do live, and stir
That wondrous, throbbing thing, the human heart,
There 's nothing holds its ground with grasp so sure
As that mysterious, tyrant power called Love.

Hail, holy love! Thy power is infinite,
And strong beyond the human mind's control.

It is not like a garment we may wear:
We cannot put it on and take it off
Again at easy will; for, once that sweet
Despotic god hath made our heart his home,
Hath swept the chamber clean and made it pure,
A sweet and holy place wherein to dwell,
Oh, he will never flinch, but hold his own

Against the loud artillery of the mind,
And lend a life-long charm of golden sheen,
A radiance pure of light that never dies,
But cheers and bears through darkest ways and days,
The heart wherein true holy love abides.

Strange, wondrous thing! How comes it planted there,
In that mysterious, fountain-spring of life?
It is not only beauty, in its grand
And varied form, or ruddy cheek, or smile
Of sweet and pleasing light, the sparkling eye,
The soft and rosy lips that breathe soft peace,—
These cannot, at their ready will, give birth
And strength to this supreme all-conquering love.
Nor is it grace of motion or of form;
Nor is it pleasing speech that charms the ear;
Nor music in its sweet bewitching flow
Of numbers played with winning subtle grace;
Nor the sweet warbling of a lover's song,
Breathed in a charm of tender melody;
Though all these things will touch the heart in turn,
And hold it with a gentle silken cord,
Which soon may break and leave it free again.

At times the heart is taken by assault:
Instant the dart is shot and finds a home.

At times this love comes creeping on so slow,
So gently, and without all show or noise,
That not a thought thereof is ever dreamed,
Until some strange or sudden circumstance
Doth light the flame, and then we, startled, find
How long the hidden fire hath smouldered there.

And let us battle as we may, and show
How mad a thing it is to give it room,
How it may mar our future course in life,
Or lead us to the very fate we would
Avoid,—'t is useless all, and we may strive
To cast the passion forth or crush it out,
It still will hold the citadel its own,
And bid defiance to weak struggling will.

We know that thrones have tottered to their fall,
That dynasties have been all swept away,
Great nations plunged in devastating war,
Because that passion, uncontrolled, has borne
Its victim onward to the last extremes,
Blind to all other cares, or hopes, or fears,
Or every comely grace that charms the eye,—
Perchance the passion that bore fruit so foul,
Did have its birth in maiden blush of love.
Oh, Love! thou little, wicked, winged thing!

That ever fliest to and fro, and all
The wide world through, and with thy ready dart,
So full of sweet, so full of bitter pain,
Dost strike at all, of high or low degree,—
Thus each may have his cup of brimming joy,
As each may drink the bitter to its dregs.

How shall we call thee by thy proper name?
Love! art thou bliss, the highest Heaven can give?
Or art thou curse, from lowest depth of hell?
For in thy grasp both every sense of pain
And joy will hold the very widest range
That human intellect can grasp or know;
So sweet to some, to others bitter gall;
But at thy best a jewelled crown of joy,
That lifts the poor man from his world of gloom,
And makes him equal to a mighty king;
That gives the happy hour of soft delight
To him that has an empire to control.
The very darkest spot in all the world
Receives an ever-pleasing light from thee;
The darkest hour that weighs upon the heart
Is brightened when thy magic presence comes.
And has not he, who sung the deathless song
In praise of him—the brave, the spotless King—
When mourning o'er the friend he loved so well,

Told, in his sweetest strain, the holy joy
That love may kindle in the human heart,
How better 't is to love, and lose the one
We loved, than never to have loved at all.*

The tale we have to tell is one of Love;
And yet it is a sad, sad tale to tell,
Of two young hearts so close together knit,
In all that makes life beautiful and good,
And gives a grandeur to our every thought;
That makes the dark and stormy cloud of life
Show forth the silver lining that doth lie
Concealed, and altogether hid away
From those poor mortals that have never known
The magic, rare, enchanting power of love,
In all its noble manliness and grace,
In all its maiden truthfulness and power.

It matters little now to name the spot,
Or yet the time, in which our tale occurred;
Let it suffice that here we say, there stood
Upon the coast of "sunny Italy,"
A town of moderate size, with harbour fair,
Where many ships did come from every clime,
And brought rich merchandise of varied sort,

* "In Memoriam."

And bore from thence choice fruits and luscious wine.
There on the quay were busy men to buy
And barter in a fair exchange of trade;
While some, like beasts of burthen, dragged their loads
About from wharf to wharf; and ever here
The lading and unlading too went on
Of ship and barge, and all the little craft
That crowd the harbour of a busy town.

This town, for all 't was busy in its trade,
And had therein its pride, yet boasted not
Alone of shipping and of wharves and quays,
And men that toiled like beasts for daily bread.
For it had parks and flowery gardens too,
And terraces of dwellings that were good,
And comely for the eye to see, and noble
Mansions where dwelt rich men; for there were men
Of wealth that dwelt about this town; and here
Were shrubberies laid out with taste and care—
With beds of flowers, with grass slopes circled round,
And gravelled paths that twisted to and fro,
And round about, through all the pleasant grove.
Here by the shady paths stood stalwart trees
Of mighty growth and venerable age;
And cypresses, that had been there for full
Five hundred years, all ranged in solemn row:

They flung their shadows o'er the sunny way
That led to tower and temple on the height,
From whence the mighty Alpine mountain range,
Its summits crowned with never-ending snow,
That shimmered in the sun like silver bright,
In all their height and glory, could be seen.

'T was in the bright warm sunny time of year,
When the clear Summer air was full of light,
And flowers were blooming in the garden fair,
Decking each glade and every spot of green
With luscious hue and every shifting shade;
And all the air was full of sweet perfume,
Which lulled the senses to a lazy calm,
And threw a halo of delight around,
That told the day of work was nearly done,
And this the hour for indolence and ease;
When the young gallant took his careless stroll,
And ladies sauntered to and fro at will,
Or listened to the timely pleasant notes
Of music swelling 'mong the shady trees.

The young Antonio now was walking out,
And through the much-frequented grounds did wend,
Where many friends and neighbours gathered then,
And talked and gossiped o'er the passing theme,

Or chatted of, and to, the fair ones there
That sauntered up and down the public way.
Soon he espied among the loitering throng,
A maiden—comely, fair, and in her teens—
Whose face did dawn upon his mind as one
That he had seen a playful child, in years,
He scarce could tell how many, past away.

He now drew near, and, with polite salute,
The lady did address; while she, with frank
And ready courtesy, did greet him fair,
With smiles, and pleasant speech, and pleasèd eye.
Antonio, now, though ever glad to say
A gentle, gallant word in ladies' ear,
(Few readier could be found), yet, after speaking
The first few words of joy that they should see
Her back again amongst them in the town,
There did he stand, nigh mute, and all confused,
With scarce a word to say. His eyes now fed
So greedily, that they did banish speech,
And sent through all his frame a timid thrill,—
Bashful he stood as boy come fresh from school.

Three years had passed since young Antonio here
Had seen this Jewish beauty, and she then
Was little more than child that tripp'd along,

Under her guardian's ever-watchful care ;
When she did run and play and sport about,
A gay, light-hearted, merry little maid.
Since then, she had been far away from home—
Some time at school, and some time travelling
To see her distant friends, and also view
The most renownèd cities of the land.
And in these years fair Jessica had grown
From childhood light to graceful womanhood,
With all that rare sweet beauty that we find
In tender youth—so charming to the eye,
So clinging to the heart's best thoughts of love !
Her cheek was fair, and gently it was tinged
With blushing mantle of the rose's hue ;
Large soft grey eyes, that wore the tender look
Of dreamy life and never-dying love ;
Fair were her locks, her lips were rich and full,
Yet not so full to give the looker-on
The faintest thought of coarseness in their form,
But just sufficient richness there to show
That in her soul no icy coldness dwelt ;
And when those lips upon each other lay
In calm repose, they bore the well-marked lines
Of will that could be firm if need should be.
Her smile was like the sunny light of day,
Giving glad joy where'er its radiance fell—

Leaving a spell of love upon the heart
Which none would ever wish to banish forth,
But rather nurse and keep it there for aye!

Her form was lithe, and full of agile grace
In every step or movement that she made;
Her voice was rich, and full of tender tones,
That fell upon the listener's pleasèd ear
Like pleasant music played with cunning hand.

And this bright form did haunt Antonio,
The long dark hours he tossed upon his bed,
For sleep was laggard as his speech had been;
Or if, perchance, a fleeting slumber came,
The waking thought clung round his brain, and he
Did dream of speaking eyes and sunny smiles—
Of words that seemed like music in his ear—
Of angel forms that filled the dreamy space,
And held him with a charm of pleased delight!
But in the morning he did laugh and jeer
Unto himself, that he should lose an hour
Of sleep because of two bright laughing eyes,
Or that a foolish maiden's lips were red,
And she had caught a cunning knack to smile
And simper when she looked, or spoke a word.
Besides, he was a Christian gentleman

And merchant of an honourable name,
And she—this maiden with the blooming cheek—
Her father was a Jew—an upright man,
No doubt, of honest fame: no one could say
One word against old Nathan Herkomar.
His dealings all were fair, and just, and true:
But still he was a Jew—a race the Christian
Had never loved; yet, for the matter there,
The Jew did hold as little love for them.
So, straightway he resolved, with Christian faith,
That he no more would go, where like to meet
The pretty soft grey eyes he still could see
Hovering about him all the live-long day.

That afternoon an accident befell
The youth, and this is how it came to be.
He never yet could tell or understand—
How could he understand? Who ever can
Tell how these strange things fall and come about?—
But, strange to say, he found himself again
Slow sauntering in the well-kept paths among
The pleasant throng; and there again he met—
He knew he should, although he *thought* he hoped
He should not meet—the fair young Jewish maid.
Their words were few; in sooth, they could not well
Be many! she leaning on a brother's arm;

Who kept Antonio in close converse there
On trade affairs,—what ships had left the port,
What they had ta'en away, and what good ships
Were likely coming with the rising tide;
With other general matters of the town.
For this young Israelite was full of trade,
And carried it about where'er he went:
A narrow mind: if not on traffic talk,
Then he, poor man! had little left to say.

For many days, sure as the morning came,
Antonio, firm resolved no more to go
And loiter in the park among the throng,
And risk his thinking more about the girl
Than he, a gentleman and Christian, ought;
But still, as sure as afternoon came on,
He found himself among the flowery paths,
And seeking out the light wherein he lived.
For, truth to tell, he now was desperate, deep,
And altogether over head in love.

Thus many days went by as in a dream;
And, though the words these two exchanged were few,
Yet each did seem to read the other's eyes—
Those eyes so eloquent with love suppressed.
And many fond endearing vows were made

In language mute, yet plain as though the words
Where uttered by the tongue of truthful love.

Antonio now did see, clear as the day,
The danger of the ground whereon he stood,
And o'er and o'er resolved that he no more
Would go where he must meet the one loved maid,
That unaware had crept into his heart:
"To play the fool," as he did term the joy
That ever is where two young trusting hearts
Will meet to tell how truly they do love,
Whether 't is told in honied words of speech
Or the mute eloquence of speaking eyes.
And he resolved to sail away from home,
Away beyond the sea, for some short while,
And view the distant cities of the world,
Where he did traffic in his commerce life,
And watch the manners and the customs strange
Of people in those distant lands which he
Had never seen; and thus in varied life
Create new fields of thought, wherein his mind
Might range, and dwell away from those soft eyes
Which haunted him in all his waking hours,
And hung about his pillow when he slept.

Then with dispatch these matters he arranged,

His letters of advice were writ, and sent
Away to those his agents in the lands
Where he did purpose spending all his time.
So firmly had he set his heart to do
That he considered was his duty then,
Albeit his heart grew sad, and loth he was
To leave so many trusty well-loved friends,
And all that seemed to give his life a charm.
For our Antonio had a purpose now,
And was not prone to let an idle thought
Turn him away from that he deemèd right;
Therefore, in spite his drooping heart, he still
Was firm to keep his purpose, and depart.

And now remained the last hours he should spend
Within his native town,—for who could tell
How long a time—in days, or months, or years?
When once a man goes forth into the world,
To travel to and fro, across the land
And sea, who then can in their wisdom tell
How soon or late he may return again,
What strange unthought-of chances may arise
To change his course and keep him still away?

Now, as he knew his course was all prepared
For his so speedy journeying far away,

He felt he now might safely go once more
Where he should surely meet fair Jessica,
And feast his eyes again upon her face,
To say one word of parting, and to hear
Once more her sweet, sweet voice, and bear with him
One last bright look to cheer him on his way.

So he bedecked him with a special care
About his dress and trimming of his beard,
That he did look a brave and gallant man
In form and bearing—one that well might please
The eye and fancy of a love-sick maid.
And thus love-sick was Jessica, though she
Did stoutly fight the feeling down, nor to
Herself would own that such a thought did live,
Or ever had held place within her heart.

Now, on this very afternoon it fell,
That same sly Cupid, with his cunning net
Of silken cord, did throw his meshes round
Our youthful friend, and lead him to his doom.
And doom it was, although in that glad hour
He deemed the maid his angel, all for good.

Thus chance would have it, as he strayed along,
He found her seated 'neath a spreading tree,

Untended and alone,—more beautiful,
More lovely in his yearning love-lorn eyes
Than she had ever seemed to him before.

Antonio then did take her ready hand,—
Their greeting was more kind than any yet
Had ever been between these lovers twain;
For, strange to say, whenever they had met,
There had been some one by to hear their words,—
It might be brother, or one near akin,
For Jessica went never out alone;
And now, rare chance! her brother had but gone
Some paces on into another path,
To speak of traffic matters with a friend.

He took the proffered seat there by her side,—
And lightly spake he of the blooming flowers,
The weather, and the trees, awhile; but then
For some short time his tongue clave to his mouth;
It seemed to him a century of years.
At length, as with a burst that now defied
All check and all control, his words rushed forth,
Fast that he scarce knew what the words he said,
But only this, that he had poured his heart
Out at the feet of her, the only maid
He ever felt that heart could truly love.

And from that hour he never questioned more
Whether 't was right or wrong—his word was passed
That he did love her, how well, time should show,
For he would love her to the end of time.

And she did sit like one entranced or dazed,
All taken by surprise with pleased delight,
That her faint vision of a misty dream
Should thus to waking sense and sound be true;
Her little thirsty ears did gladly drink
The sweet, sweet music of his honied words;—
For they did fill her with a rapid joy,
That sent a pleasing, soft, electric thrill
Through all her frame; and all her little heart
Went pulsing with a rare delightful throb,
As she soft murmured "Yes" to what he said.

Now, these two lovers they were fairly matched,
Save one was Christian and the other Jew.
Antonio's aged father who had died
Some two years ere this tale of love began,
Had left him with a heritage as fair,
In merchandise and cultivated land,
As any in the town or country near;
And he had argosies upon the sea,
And various merchandise in many lands,

And he was known, in fair and good report,
Upon the mart and in the world of trade.

And Nathan Herkomar, among his class
Stood high in honour for his dealings fair;
And he did deal in many kinds of wares,
And had his ventures both by land and sea;
Though 'mong the Christian race 't was understood
That, with old Nathan Herkomar the Jew,
Why, all was fish that came within his net;
But 'mong "the tribe" the old man held a name
Of fairly high esteem—was honoured too,
As being now a man of solid wealth:
A power of strength not only with the Jew,
But, to our humble thinking, it is held
As strength with every tribe or race of man
That ever lived upon this wondrous world.

So Nathan Herkomar was held as rich,
Possessing largely those good things that men
Consider worthy to be sought and gained;
And so thought our good friend Antonio;
And if he took fair Jessica away
From that soft comfort she had known at home,
'T was but to take her to as rich a house—
And well supplied with garniture to please

The eye that had been trained to drink a charm
Of full delight from forms of beauty, ranged
With cultivated care to please the sense.
Here antique vase and dainty sculptured form,
And golden dish, and silver tankard stood,
Surrounded with choice work of painter's skill,
On which great men renowned for noble art
Had spent their strength of genius and their love.
Soft-cushioned couch in every tempting form
Was there to woo the body to repose;
While sweet perfumes from costly vases came,
And filled with choice aroma all the air.
There stood old cabinets, all covered o'er
With cunning ornament and quaint device,
Inlaid with scented wood and shining pearl,
With golden hinge and bosses on the doors;
Instruments, waiting but to speak soft music,
Stood tempting to the fingers' learnèd touch.
Antonio loved the wooing of sweet sounds,
And could with cunning skill play wondrous well
Upon the harpsichord and gentle lute;
And often, now, in Fancy's dream could see
His Jessica there sit beside, and hear
Her play, to please his listening well-tuned ear.

Now let us tell, our friend Antonio

Was not the man to practise love by stealth,
Or meet his lady in a corner sly;
He, therefore, did entreat fair Jessica
That he might ask old Nathan for her hand;
And let it well be known that they now stood
Affianced to each other to be wed.
But, oh! she trembled at the very thought;
For well she knew the hatred that was held
By all her kindred to the "Christian crew."
And then she clasped her little hands, and wept
Hot bitter tears, and rocked her head about
Upon her pillow all night long—sore tried,
And all bewildered in her mind to know
Whatever should be best for her to do.
At times she thought she had done sadly wrong
In yielding to Antonio thus her heart—
And worse by far that she had told him so!
Then came the doubt: were it not very best
At once be firm, and see him never more?—
But give up all she held her life was worth
To have?—Then, no—no! that could never be!
Far better let them do their most and worst.
Come banishment—come even death itself!
But never give him up!—no, never that!
Oh, that she could not, even if she would!

At length it was arranged that he should now
Unto her father speak, and ask her hand.

This did Antonio straight, in manly speech,
And showing forth that all his love was honest,
Pure, and true; that he did nothing further
Ask of them than that, with the golden gift
Of her fair hand, they would bestow their friendship
And their love, which he, for her dear sake, would prize,
And hold a very valued gift indeed.
He craved the father, and the brother too,
To give their kindly thought to what he said.

Her father, Nathan Herkomar, did stand
And listen with attentive ear, and bowed,
And rubbed together his old withered hands,
And smiled—a smile that looked so like a grin;
He heard the young man's story to its end,
Without one word or sound to interrupt
Antonio, as he pleaded forth his suit;
This done, the young man craved a kind reply.

Then slowly spoke old Nathan Herkomar.
"Yes, yes, young gallant sir, eh! yes, I feel
That you now do me courtesy and grace,
In asking that I give you my poor maid,

My little Jessica, to be your wife.
I will not have so low a thought of thee,
Or of thy father, whom I did respect
And honour as a shrewd and honest man
Of trade,—for I had many weighty dealings
With your father, sir, and liked him; yes, yes, yes,
I liked him; for he always spoke me fair,
And kindly were his words and bearing too,—
I say, I will not have so poor a thought
Of thee, as think that thou art standing here
To offer wanton insult to my race,
Or insult to my age and silvered head.
But, sir, if thou didst never know before,"—
And here the old man drew his figure up
To all its height, that he did bear a grand
And noble majesty of form; his face
For the short moment did assume a look,
Resolved, though not unkindly.—Then he said,
"If thou didst never know before, know now,
That NEVER women of our race and nation
May mix their pure, their unpolluted blood
With thy—that is, I mean the Christian—race.
I thank you, sir,"—and here again he bowed,
And passed his withered hands again, and yet
Again for many times each other o'er,—
"I thank you for the honour you have done

To my poor house, in asking that my child—
My daughter, fair and young—should be your wife."

The old man turned him to his books again.
The son, who had stood scowling by, the while,
Now, with a black, contemptuous sneer, stepped forth,
And, mocking, led Antonio to the door.

Now, sorely was the youth perplexed in mind,
How he should act, and yet be faithful, true,
And altogether free from blame in this.
To urge the maiden, was to counsel her
That she should straight defy her father's will,
And separate herself from kindred, friends,
And all the pleasant ties of early life.
For well he knew that Nathan Herkomar
Would never give consent that he should take
Young Jessica; but rather, if they wed,
As one that's dead, he then would cast her off.
Also within the circle of his friends,
He knew right well that he should give offence,
To some, indeed, offence both deep and sore,
That he should e'er so far forget his faith,
And all his training in the Christian cause,
To wed a maiden from that hated tribe
Which Christian men—GOD save the mark!—did think

It just and pious in the sight of Heaven
To crush with cruel mockery and wrong ;
And, oh ! full well the Jewish people knew
How strong the feeling of contempt wherewith
The Christian people held them every one.
For "Sufferance was the badge of all their tribe ;"
And this, when our friend Nathan was a lad,
Had been felt stronger 'mong the Jewish race,
Stronger oppressed by every Christian man :
The feeling and the cause had softened down,
Ere Jessica and young Antonio met.
Now, though they mixed more freely on the mart,
And oft in social life they would exchange
Kind acts of hospitality and grace,
Still, in the heart, these people were not loved,
And Christians held a man had truly lost
Some little of his social worth if he
Should wed a daughter of the Jewish race !

Now, weeks and months of anxious trouble fell
Upon this youth and on this maiden fair,
Of which it boots not here that we should speak,
Save that the maid was kept in durance close,
Pining and fretting out her very soul,
While rare the chance that she could ever see
Or send a line to him she loved so well.

But let it now suffice we here should tell,
How on a bright, gay, sunny morn in Spring,
This lady did elude the watchful care
Of those her father, in his anxious love,
Had set to guard her from the dire disgrace,
His fancy pictured would befall his house,
If Jessica should wed the Christian youth.

There now she stood, Antonio by her side,
Before the altar of a Christian church,
Surrounded by grim monuments and tombs
Of heroes who had lived, and fought, and died
Upon the great broad battle-field of life,
For weal or woe, in ages long gone by;
And sculptured figures of departed knights,
Who, in their day, had raised the lance and shield,
And waved the banner with the blood-red cross,
In holy war, and bade defiance brave
To all who dared to lift a lance, or cry
Against their watchword—"Christendom."

She stood,
Pale, trembling, timid thing; for now strong grief
Had greatly paled the roses in her cheek,
And made her seem more statue-like and fair;
A grand ethereal beauty seemed to sit

Upon her chiselled face and rounded form,
Which gave a look of proud nobility,
Of beauty, to her lightest act or word;
And her sweet smile was in its sweetness made
More sweet and winning by the paleness there
That sat upon her love-enticing brow.
The two thus stood in all their comely youth,
Before the altar of this Christian church,—
The pale light through the painted window fell
Around them as they stood, and seemed to throw
A halo of refulgent glory there,
And fill their glad young hearts with life and love,—
That they might now by holy ring and book,
And holy blessing craved in their behalf,
Be joined in holy wedlock's mystic bonds;
Strange, mystic bonds indeed! that wed two souls
In union here, and not for time alone,
Not e'en in Death shall this strange union die,
But live and bloom through all eternity.

And they were happy in their wedded love.
This life, to each was only worth the name,
When by the other's side; for Jessica
The day was all too long when he was gone,
The eve was all too short when he was near;—
And ever as his duties called him forth

From home, his heart he left behind with her,
All hovering ever round and o'er her head,
And by her path where'er her footsteps went;
His arms did hunger till they came again,
To clasp her in their warm and true embrace.

Thus time fled by on joyous painted wing,
And all the Summer months were full of bliss,
To these two hearts so young and fresh with love,—
And yet so pure that it did never cloy,
That their glad honeymoon was long drawn out,
So long that it did never seem to end;
But, lingering on, grew brighter day by day.
And these two lives, so far as eye could see,
Bade fair that o'er the varied road of life
They 'd wend together happy to the end.

JESSICA.

PART II.

A MAN who all his life has been engrossed
In striving how to buy at cheapest cost,
And selling at the highest market rate;
In ever keeping watchful eye upon
The shifting change of price and varied worth
Of all the many kinds of merchandise
That come upon the mart where he may trade;
Who has to fight with keen and subtle wit,
Each trader, when he buys or sells, from high
And very noble men of pure intent,—
Whose word, once pledged, is like a heaven-made law,
That nought on earth would lead them to deny,—
Down to the needy, shifting charlatan;
He in his trade acquires a hardened thought,—
A money-getting-grip doth hold his mind,
Which makes him watch and bargain seeming close,
Lest he should lose some vantage on the change.

Thus, Nathan Herkomar was hard in craft,
Through dealing with a hard and crafty world;
And in his dealings few men keener strove
To buy or sell, and get the better part
Of every bargain that he had to make.
Yet in his home, a tenderness of heart
Did rule his words, and guide each little act;
And open-handed liberality
Was his in all the matters of his life,
Where "business" did not come to rule the act.
Nor ever harsh or grating word was heard
To fall from him when talking to his child.
His daughter was "the apple of his eye:"
In her were centred all his hopes and fears:
He watched her with a never-ceasing care,
Almost a woman's tenderness of love,
Almost a mother's yearning for her babe:
She lacked nothing that his love could give,—
No robe too costly that his purse could buy,
No gem of price too choice for her to wear.

Now, when he found that all his watchful care
Had failed, and that his darling Jessica
His house had fled, and gone through Christian rites
Of marriage with a Christian—then a sharp
And bitter pang of pain shot through his soul,

And he did bow his whitened head, and weep
Great bitter tears, hot tears of sorrow sad.
A deep and heavy grief it was that fell
Upon the heart of Nathan Herkomar.
He looked upon his daughter as one dead
And altogether gone away from him,—
And one whose face he should behold no more;
So strove to banish from his heart all thought
Or interest he could feel for living child;
But bowed his head, and mourned her as one lost,
Cherishing with all tenderness of heart
The fond remembrance of those few short years
That she had lived his darling and his joy.

Her brother! he was cast in different mould:
His heart was narrow,—with a jealous brain,
Incapable of feeling living love
For aught that breathed, except himself alone,
And that poor fitful shaky bit of clay
He loved with all the ardour of his soul.
What in a nobler mind would be dislike,
With him was bitter hate. And he did let
These angry fancies hold him in their grip,
And riot o'er his little field of thought.
Antonio thus he hated with a hate
That none but little minds can ever feel.

It was not for his fortune or his state :
Antonio's wealth was equal with their own ;
Or that he could not well maintain his wife
In honourable luxury and ease;
For he could gain her fitting entrance free
Among the best society they had ;
There was not e'er a fault or flaw to find
In him or in his conduct or his ways :
But he did hate him for his Christian faith,
For that Antonio won away the love
Of that young sister whom he highly prized,—
And set his heart that she should wedded be
To some great wealthy merchant of their race.
And he did judge her peerless beauty bright
A thing of price to win him honour high,
And yet a higher standing in the land
Than they had ever held, or hoped to hold
Until this "pearl of price" to them was given.
Now all these golden hopes were gone ! The prize
Had slipped away from out his greedy grasp,
Just at the very hour he thought his hopes
Were surely ripening to the very full.
And this young Herkomar did, uncontrolled,
Let all his fancy loose, to run its round
Upon the grievance of his fancied wrongs.

So went he brooding on from day to day,
His hard heart feeding on the richest food
Of jealousy his mind could furnish forth,
Till what began in thwarted hope and aim,
Did end in wild hate hungering for revenge,—
And that revenge, the life of him he hated.

His better and his worser Angel fought
With varied triumph o'er this wayward mind;
But, truth to tell, the Angel pure and good,
That counselled charity, and love, and peace,
And told how good a thing it was that brethren
Should here in unity together dwell,—
Had little chance to win the battle there,
When all the suffrages that held the brain
Were strong in favour of the darker foe.

All youthful joy was banished from his life,—
The earth, with all its varied gold and green,—
The gem-like richness in their thousand hues
Of colour which the luscious flower-beds bear,
With all the fulness of their Summer grace,—
The leafy trees which make the peaceful shade,—
The rippling brook;—and e'en the very sky,
With all its glory of ethereal blue,
Did lose their form, their colour, and their charm,

And to his eye could nought of joy disclose;
For all was dark, and bleared with hideous hate,
That stood up, like a giant in his path,
Now blotting out the love-light of the sun,
And deadening every music-sound that fell,
Luring him on to darkest thought and deed;
And showed, as in a mirror glass, that now
The world, with all its breadth of land and sea,
Had not sufficient room to bear the load
Of him and of the man he so did hate.
The very air of heaven now seemed to have
A taint of bitter poison as he breathed,
From the bare knowledge that Antonio now
Was breathing the same air which he did breathe.

So he resolved Antonio now should die,—
And straight he set his wicked brain to plan
How he could slay him and escape the law;
For though he felt 't were very death to live
While that man lived, he had no wish himself
To die,—at this his coward heart recoiled,
And big round drops of fear bedewed his brow.
He would not stain his own hand with the blood;
He recked not then the deeper stain by far
That on his blackened soul would ever lie,
Nor death itself could wash it clean away:

One thing alone was present to his mind,
And that—Antonio now must cease to live.
Thus when his deadly plans were all prepared,
He hired a caitiff hand to strike the blow—
He did not dare to strike it with his own—
While he stood by to see the deed was done,
And drink the full cup of his dark revenge.

The Winter now had come with all its force,—
The long, long nights, the short and fleeting days;
And this was pleasant to the warm young heart
Of Jessica; and, 't is true Antonio
Did all as much the happy long nights love,
When they could sit and chat the quiet hour,
And look with fancy's eye adown the road
Of life, and picture many pleasant spots
Where they might rest, and in old age look back,
With heart-absorbing joy, upon the time
When happy children played around the knee,
And life was like a gladsome Summer day.

Now, one of these cold, short-lived sunny days
Had passed, the rosy gleam of light had paled
And faded down behind the distant Alps,
And as grim night now drew its curtain round,
And blotted out the love-light of the sky,

She, to beguile the dull and weary hours
That lagged ere her Antonio should return,
Did take her dainty-fashioned mandoline,
And from its cords, well strung to music's tune,
She brought a simple pleasing melody,
To which she sang this simple song.

SONG.

Sing, little birdie, up in the tree,
Tell if my lover is thinking of me;
All the bright sunny day,
Singing your roundelay,
Sitting and singing high up in the tree:
Tell in my willing ear
Sweet words I wish to hear,
That my true lover is thinking of me.

Sing, little birdie, high on the spray,—
Sing to me, now that my lover 's away.
When on light wing you fly
Up in the bright blue sky,
Hover a moment where'er he may be;
Catch up his last fond sigh,
Hither then quickly hie,
Fly with it quickly, sweet birdie, to me.

Sing, little birdie, sing in the tree,
Singing your sweet song, sing it to me!
Sing on the sunny day,
When my love 's far away,
Far over the land and over the sea;
Tell where his steps do roam,
Tell if they wander home,
Tell that my lover is coming to me.

She ceased her song, and sought around the room,
To put each little thing of beauty's form
In place where it would show with best effect,
To please the eye she loved so well to please;
For all within Antonio's well-trimmed house
Was beauty, light, and dainty-cushioned ease.

While she sat listening for the well-known step,
A sound like to a cry of pain did break
The stillness of the night that hung around,—
A rapid shuffling sound, a heavy fall
Did cause fair Jessica to start with fear:
She scarce had time to grasp the friendly arms
That stretched out from the couch whereon she sat,
Ere there did come a heavy crash against
Her chamber door, which burst the fastening bolt,
And made it there fly open with a bang.

Anon a mass of many human forms
All jumbled up in great confusion came,—
Or seemed to her bewildered eye to come,
And fill the room as would a mighty cloud.
The boding of a great and crushing woe
Did rob poor Jessica of speech or power
To call for aid, until this moving mass
Began to take the face and form of those
She knew so well and loved so faithful true.
There, when she saw her husband speechless, pale,
With all the life gone from his comely frame,
Propped helpless on a richly-cushioned chair,
And all besmeared with dear heart's blood—at sight
Of this pale, ghastly form she gave one shriek—
One loud, long, piercing cry of agony,
That rang through every corner of the house;
Then sat and stared, more like a block of stone
Than like a living thing, while very life,
And all she cared to live for here on earth,
Was bleeding fast to death before her eyes.

Then broke her brother's voice, in taunting tone,
Upon her ear, now all but dead to sound,
And said: "Good sister, don't you welcome me?
See here, I 've brought your pretty lover home;
Why greet you not his coming? Look you here:

His cheek how ruddy; come and kiss him now,
When his bright blood is mantling o'er his face.
Come! greet him fondly with caresses sweet.
Come, come! why leave you him so long alone?
Why show this tardy love at his return?
Why, see, his very heart's blood gushes forth
To tell how much he feels your coldness, now
That no sweet kisses greet him at his door."

But Jessica ne'er moved or spake one word;
But sat with glazèd eye and haggard look
That glared upon the coward murderer there.
He laughed aloud; but in the very midst
Of that wild, wicked laugh, his heart did tell
That his young sister sitting there was DEAD,
And vengeance had been deeper than he wished.

One moment more he stood to gaze around,
And watch the desolation he had made,
His black heart trembling at the ghastly stare
That glared upon him from the dead man's eyes;
Then fled he fast as hot pursuing fear
Could urge his coward feet to fly along;
Nor did he ever pause upon his way
Until the wharf he reached where lay the ships,

And hid himself in one that he had hired
To sail away that very hour to sea.

That night a heavy storm beat on the coast;
Wild screams, as if from dying men, were heard
Out in the black, dark night, where human aid
Could never come; and many ships went down
In the wild, seething sea—no record left,
Save drifting wreck upon a sandy shore.

* * * * * *

And Nathan Herkomar, the patriarch,
Did, after some short lapse of fleeting time,
Show tokens that the iron grasp of thought
And action, which had ever strongly marked
His dealings and his daily mode of life,
Was broken now, and shrinking to decay;
And sense of day that passed, or present things,
Were lost in memory of long-gone years,
All jumbled up with incoherent words
That brought no meaning to the listening ear.

At times he raved, and talked of heaps of gold;
Of vessels laden with rich merchandise;
Of costly robes, with gold and velvet trimmed;
And furs, the richest that the world could yield;

Of jewels, set with many-coloured stones
Of priceless worth, that sparkled like the stars;
And bade them deck his daughter out with pride,
And set her in a golden-cushioned chair;
"For was not she a queen? Oh, she was rich
In gold and land!—Ay, better than a queen!
For she was beautiful as light of day,
And kind and tender was her noble heart,
And like his darling Rachael in the skies."

We will not, for 't is needless we should tell
In close detail, the many painful moods
And shifting phases of the sad decay
That show themselves, when once the mind is gone.

Dark mystery is the working of the brain
How difficult to understand the why,
Or what the tissues of this brain can be,
That change within an hour their normal tone
Of soundest thought, of strength, and active will,
To raving, helpless idiotcy?

'T is strange,
When once that wondrous mighty tower of strength,
Which, in its health, can mould, like plastic clay
The weighty complex things that hourly rise

Within the sphere where it doth hold its will,
By some slight thing, a little over-work,
A little turmoil in the home affairs,
Or special traffic,—thought to turn to good,
But ending sadly in a bankrupt name;—
Some trivial thing, light, in the broad world sense,
As cooing dove upon a high tree-top,
Will cause that subtle thing to lose its grip,
And sink to helpless imbecility.

Thus sad the state of Nathan Herkomar;—
And many months did slowly pass away.
At times his malady was raving madness;
At others, docile as a little child:
Now singing light, as though no care on earth
It e'er had been his lot to meet withal;
At other times, in very different moods,
He 'd sit and weep, and moan himself to sleep;
But that which caused his brain to lose its hold—
The sudden, heavy, crushing woe that fell
Upon him and upon his honest name—
Did seem to hold no place upon his mind.
He never mentioned that a crime was done,
Or that a son of his had ever lived;
He only spoke of her, "his daughter dear,"
And of his wife, his "Rachael in the skies."

Then came the time when those who watched him saw
That he was sinking gently to his rest;
His mind more calm and settled in its tone,
Himself more like the former self he'd been
Ere grief had cast that mind from off its throne;
But in each matter of his personal care
As helpless as a one-year little babe.

At length dark night came on, and then he lay
Upon his bed, and moaned, and called upon
His daughter's name, in such fond, tender tones
That made the hearer's heart with sorrow weep—
"My loved one! Jessica! light of my eyes!
Thou darling of my heart, so good and true,
So beautiful, and ever kind to me,
As ever kind to all! Come, kiss me, darling!
Come, kiss thy poor old father ere he sleeps."

He slept! and when the light of morning came,
The keepers found that he had gone where darkness
Never comes at all.

WALTER BLANE.

The bells rang out from the old church tower,—
They rang out clear at the midnight hour;
The Old Year was dying upon the wind,
The New Year was coming a breath behind;
The Old Year was dying with all its care,
The New was coming bright, hopeful, and fair!
The bells rang out with a dingle-ding-dong—
Cheery and bright as an evening song.
Through many a window there streamed the light
From lamp and from fire on the wintry night,
Giving a glow to the snow so bright;
For the snow was lying thick on the ground,
And thickly was falling in flakes around,
As the bells rang out all merry to hear,
In welcome and love to the new-born year.
There—as the Old Year was passing away,
And the New was coming, feathered so gay—

A man crept, timid and shivering, along :
Strange music for him had the bells' ding-dong !
For he was weary, and broken, and sad :
Hard hunger, and cold, and poverty had
Travelled along with him many a day,
As onward he wended his storm-beaten way.
No kind voice was there his coming to greet ;
As he plodded along the village street
The frosty snow crackled beneath his feet,
And the warm light streamed through the window-pane,
As he stood at the door of old Captain Blane.
There, as he stood in the winter snow,
He heard the soft sounds of music flow,
And voices join in the chorus near,
Singing a hymn to the glad New Year.
Oh ! well the strain the poor wanderer knew—
The voices that sang were tender and true :
Sweet sounds that fell on his heart like dew.
For long were the years, all toilsome and sore,
Since last he had stood at that well-known door ;
And rough was the way, and weary and long,
Since last he had heard the sweet voices or song.

And there beside that old door as he stood,
Bowed down and broken, and fainting for food—
His fortunes all scattered abroad to the wind—

Nor hope had he there, save that he should find
A mother to pity and yearn for her son,
And pardon all sins he ever had done—
Through his wild lost life, since that long-past day
When, half in blind wrath, he went on his way:
His father was angry, his mother was sad—
Sore weeping in woe for her wayward lad,
That nought she could do, and nought she could say,
Would change his resolve, or tempt him to stay.
When in wrath he went from his love and his home,
Over the sea in the wide world to roam,
His fortunes to seek on a far-distant shore,
And, without wealth, to see home never more.

He left one heart that never ceased to pray,
In all the years that he had been away,
That Angels still his path might ever lead,
To guide and guard him in his daily need,
And bring him where rich fields of golden grain
Should give reward for labour, and sustain
The courage and the strength for daily toil,
To feed the lowing herd, or till the soil;
That flocks and herds should prosper in his care;
That health and plenty aye might be his share,
Or whatsoe'er his hands should find to do,
Those hands and heart would evermore be true!

There, in the morning, and at eve again,
Her prayer was ever breathed for Walter Blane;—
Had they not true and fondly loved each other:
She more than sister—he far more than brother?
For, true, that little Cupid Love had been,
And constant carried tender thoughts between
The girlish heart that loved the handsome lad,
Though all in modest grace her words were clad;—
And him, too bashful his true love to tell,
Though he did love her true—till it befell
One day they met, and walked the green woods through,
Where purple violet and primrose grew,—
Where birds were singing on the branches high;
And through the tender green, the clear blue sky
Seemed all in love to shine upon the pair—
The handsome youth, the blushing maiden fair;
And they did gather posies as they went
Happy along, and to each other lent
Kind aid to pluck, and also lent kind eyes
To see the beauties that they each did prize,—
And, pleased to see the bright flowers by the way—
The dappled green that decked the sunny day,
Where shadows came, and gently glide away,
There sat they down beside a murmuring brook,
He scarcely dared in Ethel's eyes to look,
For love was tugging at his heart so wild,

He felt as bashful as a timid child ;
Nor could he find fit words to tell her all
He wished to tell, nor at her feet could fall,
And vow that life, and all he had to give,
Were hers alone, while he had life to live.

There, on the grassy bank, as in a dream,
He threw small pebbles in the murmuring stream ;
While, with a rosy blossom, she sat by,
Plucking it leaf from leaf, she knew not why ;
But, in a listless, half unconscious way,
Waiting to hear what Walter had to say.
And he, poor lad, his purpose all unstrung,
No fitting words came to his tardy tongue.
But Cupid all the while was flitting near,
Whispering soft love into each lover's ear ;
So with his silken thread their hearts enwove,
And, without words, they vowed a lasting love
They 'd ever constant to each other be,
Whatever shifting Fate might them decree.
There sat they on that sunny Spring-tide day,
Musing and dreaming the soft hours away :
He cared not how the sunny time sped on,
As in the brook he threw a pebble-stone ;
She never thought the dreamy time was brief,
As from the rose she plucked a blushing leaf.

So Walter sat and blamed his tardy tongue,—
He could not find the proper words to say,
And then he picked, and in the brook he flung
The little stones that round about him lay.

"The longest lane must have a turn," so says
The proverb, old and true; and sunny days
Must have an end, and pleasant hours as well.
With Walter Blane and Ethel May it 'fell,
As these two gentle lovers sat and mused;—
Or e'er a single love-word yet they 'd used,
They turned, and caught each other's earnest eyes,
As true and deep as the pure azure skies;
They seemed to look into each other's heart,
Deep down into the very inmost part,
And read the pulses that were throbbing there,
Which told how each the other's thoughts did share.
Then Walter, timid, took her hand in his,
And through his soul there ran a thrill of bliss;
And gentle Ethel looked so loving, kind,—
When footsteps on the beaten path behind
Did cause them start, and Ethel, blushing red,
Let go his hand, and turned away her head,—
While Walter rose with honest manly grace
To see who came, and meet him face to face.

His father, Captain Blane, was standing there,—
Who scarce one little moment stopped to stare,
But with "Ah, Walter!" passed upon his way—
He did not deign to notice Ethel May.

Now these two lovers homeward took their way.
Few were the words they uttered as they went;
For some strange feeling to their hearts did say,
The sunny day had well and ill been spent;
Howe'er affairs should turn, for weal or woe,
They both did feel a certain sense of pain,
And that their new-told love would sweeter grow,
Had they not, by the brook, met Captain Blane.

Then, as they stood beside the churchyard gate,
To say "Good bye"—to say "Farewell;" for Fate
Had ordered so in its severe decree,
That they should not again each other see,
Till many long, long years had passed away—
Sad years for Walter Blane and Ethel May.
But such a thought ne'er came to rouse their fears,—
Their hearts were glad, they never thought of tears;
For young hearts never dream that worldly pride
Can come to set their true love all aside.
They stood one moment there to say farewell:
They looked into each other's eyes to tell

How faithful true their loving hearts did beat;
How slow the time till they again should meet.
He, with her two hands clasped within his own,
"Ethel, believe that I am yours alone;
I know to me you ever will be true."
"Walter, for ever I 'll be true to you,
Come weal, come woe, whatever fate befall,
I love you, Walter, better far than all
I ever knew, or ever hope to know."
She let her eyelids fall, a crimson glow
Of blushes spread all o'er her neck and face;
While Walter Blane—but that the public place
Whereon they stood was open to the gaze
Of every passer-by—had with embrace
Of true, strong love, ta'en kisses o'er and o'er,
And with his wish they ne'er had parted more.
"Darling," he cried, "how tardy time will fly
Till we shall meet, now we must say good-bye."

That day, when from his walk stout Captain Blane
Returned, full late, unto his home again,
A frown of strong displeasure settled now
Upon his every feature, and his brow
Was darkened with a baffled, angry thought
That all his highest hopes might come to nought.
Some oft-diluted drops of noble blood

Ran in his veins, and this was ample food
To feed his vanity for titled fame;
He held that *everything* was in a name:
He'd rather have one drop of noble blood
Than own the whole broad county where he stood;
He held it all untrue and worthy scorn,
That noble thought could dwell in lowly born;
And he declared all noble deeds were done,
That all the famous battles had been won
By men of noble birth, of station high,
And never by the sons of poverty.
And aye he looked on Walter, his good son,
With favouring eyes of senseless pride, as one
That should, as time rolled on, raise up his name
To lordly eminence and world-wide fame.
For Walter, so the foolish parent thought,
Had but to choose his path in life, and nought
Could stop him from the highest paths of fame,
Or cloud the future lustre to his name.
In fact, he built a castle in the air,
Where all was bright, and beautiful, and fair,
And all the landscape blazed with Summer sheen,
With rosy hues and thousand tints of green,
And happy faces all around were seen;
While in the crowd he hears, again, again—
"The father of this man is Captain Blane!"

Now, it did make him angry with his son,
That all these sunny hopes should be undone;
That this same castle he had built so fair
Should fall, and vanish like the misty air,
All for a foolish fancy in the lad
About a girl, with dolly face, that had
Made him to think, forsooth he was in love.
"Mad boy!" the father thought, "I 've seen him move
Of late as though he wandered in a dream,
And to all outward things indifferent seem;
But this must end! No nonsense now! that 's plain!
No 'dolly face' shall wed with Walter Blane."

Though Captain Blane did call her "dolly face,"
No rude remark could be more out of place,
Or more untrue, unapt in every way,
To the calm face of sweet young Ethel May.
'T is true her lips were cherry ripe and full,
And might a Stoic tempt that he could cull
And taste the ripening sweets that there did play;
But when those sweet lips calm reposing lay,
There came expression o'er her oval face
Of sweetest beauty, tenderness, and grace.
'T is true she had a fair and blushing cheek;
'T is true her eyes were large, but they did speak
Such eloquence of thought and depth of love,

That told no power on earth could ever move
When once within her heart conviction grew
The course she took was fair, and right, and true.

She was no beauty, of that common mould,
That blazed abroad, and ever loudly told
To all who came, to each light passer-by,
" Look thou with rapture, then depart and sigh."

Young Ethel's was the beauty of a heart
Where truth and gentleness, with cunning art,
Did paint the face in such rare light and shade
That Time may alter, but which ne'er can fade;
For Time might change her sunny locks to grey,
Cause wrinkles 'bout the speaking eyes to play;
There, 'stead of blooming youth, old age may be,
Yet her sweet beauty would be fair to see.

And Captain Blane resolved to make a stand
To crush the foolish business out of hand;
He never doubted but his son would yield,
And leave him easy master of the field.
So, soon as might be, as the day wore on,
He called his son to speak with him alone.

One hour they sat, and when that hour was o'er,
Forth Walter came, now flinging wide the door;

With firm resolve his face was all on fire—
He 'd not fulfil the dictates of his sire.
The old man argued, and with passion strove,
His son from this "weak love affair" to move;
But Walter, firm to that which he had done,
Would not give up the faithful heart he 'd won.
He left the house, and wandered far away,
Deep in the night—he cared not—did he stray.

'T was dawning day ere he again did come
To seek his pillow at his father's home;
And ere another Spring-tide day was past,
Young Walter Blane his future course had cast:
He left his home, his love, and all he cared
To love, and all and everything that shared
His best esteem, with only time to write
A word to Ethel—yet once more to plight
His troth to her, and tell that he was gone
Far, far across the sea, and all alone,
Yet strong in hope that there would Fortune's smile
His constant love sustain him all the while;—
And should his toil be blessed with fortune fair,
He would return and claim her then, to share
His fortune's crown, and, without wish to roam,
Bring joy and gladness to his happy home.

He sailed away across the broad, deep seas,
He sailed away to the Antipodes,
With hope as fair, as full of firm intent
As ever youth to carve his fortunes went;
And all his aims were high, and firm, and pure;
To win success he 'd every effort use;
Should fortune lag, he 'd patience to endure,
But never time or talents would abuse.
So, strong in purpose, went he on his way,
To do the very best that in him lay.

But oft, too oft, the best that we can do,
Let all our plans be strictly right and true,
Will come to nought, and Fate seems still to frown.
And each new effort hurls us lower down,
Leaving us weak to try the chance again.
Such lot, alas! befell young Walter Blane:
Nought that he touched would prosper in his hands,
Were 't sheep or cattle, digging gold or land.

Each thing had failed, till disappointment sore
Drove him, not loth, to seek the public store,
And, thinking he might consolation find,
To drain the cup, the curse of all mankind,—
A curse that many a happy home has cast
Away to perish in the wintry blast,

And little children, with their wailing cry,
In misery left in the cold world to die.
Full many a noble brain and gallant heart,
Both formed for highest thought and mighty part,
They would have added lustre to the age,
And in their country's record claimed a page,
But this fell curse with demon malice came,
Blighting the hopes like fast-consuming flame,
Leaving, alas! instead of honour—shame;
Instead of niche to tell that they had been,
A nameless grave doth sadly close the scene.
So with each maddening draught he daily drained,
He lower sank, till little now remained
Of that stern self-respect, those cleanly ways
Which give man health, and strength, and length of days;
Which bear him high above the rabble throng,
And gives him might to battle 'gainst the wrong.

Thus down he went, down lower day by day,
His time still given to riot, drink, and play;
Each morning brought new vows for better life,
Each evening proved him worsted in the strife.

Then years of wand'ring life went o'er his head:
He joined the ranks, he bravely fought and bled

In that great war which raged a country through,
When States were ruined where rich plenty grew.

The war had ceased, and once more Walter Blane
Was thrown upon the busy world again—
Once more to try, and yet once more to fail—
Again at froward Fortune he did rail.
More weak the effort now he made to stand
Against the tempting vices of the land:
His courage lost—his self-reliance gone—
No friend to help—he drifted down alone;
Down, down, still down, with rapid steps did he
Sink to the very depths of poverty.

We could not here, e'en should we so desire,
Now wade through all the squalid mirk and mire—
Through all the scenes of wild debauch and care—
Through all the mad adventures he did share;
We would not, if we could, drag on the tale,
So sickening to the sense, where all did fail,
When every failure sank him deeper still,
His brimming cup of wretchedness to fill—
From the bright pinnacle of home and love,
Where peace and tenderness with fancy wove
The silken meshes that did softly bind
And hold in gentle thrall the willing mind—

Down to the very lowest depths of care,
And poverty that dogged him everywhere.
We will not tell of all the changing years—
Of all his shifting fortunes, hopes, and fears,
In every varied scene, in close detail:
Enough that we have said they all did fail.

It chanced at last, that in a wild carouse,
He did the anger of a drunkard rouse,
Who, without pause, did fire upon the man,
And Walter Blane lay wounded, bleeding, wan,
As though he must have died; but not one care
Or kindly word from e'er a ruffian there,—
They kept on brawling o'er their angry game,
Like some wild beasts no human art can tame.

'T was only in the early dawn of light,
A woman, haggard and in piteous plight,
Came down to where the bleeding man did lie;
His pallid face turned upward to the sky;
There as she gazed the big hot tear did start.—
What was it touched the tender woman heart
Of one that had been long a waif and stray,
An outcast creature on the world's wide way?
Perhaps the face, still bearing marks of youth,
Recalled to her the days of maiden truth;

Perhaps a happy home—a father, mother;
Perhaps one loved far dearer than a brother.—
She pressed her lips to his, then brushed away
The hot, hot trickling tear—as if to say,
"What! what have I to do with foolish tears?—
With tender thoughts of bygone, happy years?"
Then set herself to help poor Walter Blane,
To heal his wounds, and make him well again.
But long he lay in wasting fever there,
And she did tend him with a mother's care:
In all his suffering, she was ever by
To comfort and to smooth his every sigh.

And this strange woman nursed him as he lay,
Until the fever all had passed away—
Till feeble strength did, halting, slow return,
And o'er his cheek faint flush of health did burn.
But faster far than health, or strength of limb,
A yearning, strong desire did come to him—
A yearning for his home: no other sound
Could fill his ear: he heard it all around;
He heard it in the sighing winds among
The leafy trees; the little song-birds' song
Did seem to whisper "Home!" to him, "come home!"
And so he yearned for home and loved ones dear;

At times would come a chilling sense of fear,
That made his heart to throb with quickening pain,
That he their faces ne'er should see again—
That all-remorseless Time had called away
Those dearly loved ones from the light of day!

One eve he sat beside the open door,
The sunbeams glancing on the whitened floor,
And this strange woman, mistress of the place,
Sat gazing in his wasted, wistful face.
His heart was full of bygone days, and sad;
Nor could he see that aught would make him glad;
But there was in the woman's eyes did say,
"What makes you look so very sad to-day?"
So sad! Then he did feel relief to tell
Of all his early hopes, and how he fell.

He told the story of his wandering life,
His frequent failure, and his constant strife
With adverse circumstances, chances lost,
Trust placed in those that, to his bitter cost
Had proved untrue,—had robbed him of his store,
And sent him wandering, beggared, from their door;
And how that all his early schemes had failed,
Where'er he turned how evil had assailed,

Whate'er he touched the end was still the same,
And Fortune, shrinking, withered where he came;
How dark despair had seized upon his mind;
How he in drunkard's cup did solace find;
And all he told, down to the very day
When she had found him as he wounded lay.

Then as the sun went sinking out of sight,
And all the landscape glowed with tender light,
The wanderer's heart, with gush of holy tears,
Flew back to home and all his early years.
And now to him his father looked less stern;
He knew for him his mother's heart would yearn;
And he did pour out all—his every thought—
To her, who ne'er by word or gesture sought
To lead him on to tell the tale; but there
Did gazing sit, and listen to his care
And woe, which long-spun life would not efface;
Then covering, with his hands his flushing face,
He now did tell of all his trusting love;
How well he knew that she would constant prove,
How her sweet voice and how her sweet young face
Were by, where'er he went, in every place;
And how the fancied sound of favourite song
Had held him back from doing sinful wrong—

Had given him strength to brave hard Fortune's frown,
Nor let despair, all crushing, bear him down.

When ending all his long disjointed tale,
How he did ever hope, how he did fail:
Now railing at his fate in fierce words, wild,
Now breaking down, and weeping like a child:
"Tell me," he said, with piteous look and cry,
"Oh! tell me what to do, ere that I die,
That father, mother"—then with trembling tone,—
"And Ethel too—may know that here, alone,
My heart goes down all trembling to their knee,
Once more to hear each voice, each face to see.
God grant me yet some little time to live,
To hear them answer when I cry 'forgive!'"

Then rose the woman from her lowly chair,
And gently laid her hand upon his head.
"Whatever here is mine, 't is yours to share,
Till thou art strong enough to go," she said.
"I will not urge or hurry you away;
I will not plead one hour that thou shouldst stay.
God knows the lonely life that will be mine
When thou art gone to glad the eyes of thine
Own people; yet I say, Rise up and go,
And seek thy father's face: who can know,

When his old eyes once more thy face shall see,
He yet may kill the fatted calf for thee.
Rise up, and take thy sturdy staff in hand,
Go, journey onward to thy native land.
And I—a poor worn thing, a bruisèd reed,
Have joyed to help thee in thy sorest need.
—No, no! No thanks from thee! no thanks from thee!
I'll have no thanks,—no thanks are due to me.
O GOD!"—and clasping close her withered hands—
"O GOD!" she cried, "and Thou art very good
To send a stranger from the far-off lands,
To turn this poor worn heart of withered wood—
To warm and tender-pulsing flesh again,
And wake the mem'ry of past happy days,
When neither grief nor sorrow, sin nor stain,
Had cast the darkening shadow o'er our ways.
Give thanks to me? Oh, no! 'Tis I should thank
That thou hast come to change the awful blank
That dark despair had made within my heart.
GOD grant it come not back when you depart."
She let the tear steal on, and turning round,
With tender looks, unto the man she said,
"Go! take thy staff: thy native bells shall sound;
Go, seek thy father, mother,—and the maid."

* * * * * *

Now, when the sunny Spring again came round,
When bright flowers dappled all the gushing ground,
When lambs were sporting on the grassy plain,
And brooklets babbled forth their silvery strain;
When sweet May-blossoms scented all the air,
And Nature looked as though nor cold nor care
Could ever dwell these broad green fields among,
Where all was full of flowers and feathered song;—
Then chimed the old church bells with merry ring;
The village children all went forth to sing,—
To strew bright flowers along the sunny way,
And deck the porch with laurels for the day.
The church bells rang, the people all did shout,
A bride and bridegroom from the church came out
All smiling, joyous as the glad, bright day,—
And they were Walter Blane and Ethel May.

A LIFE.

I saw them plough the broad land ere the year was done;—
In Spring the tender green leaf shimmer in the sun;
Again the corn with full ear wave in the Summer air,—
And when the Autumn sun shone bright, golden corn was there.

I saw the reapers reaping, in the early morn;
I saw the reapers reaping, 'mid the golden corn;
Still toiling in the noonday; again at set of sun
Wending their dusty way home: their hard day's work was done.

I saw two children playing on the grassy lea,
Gathering the daisy pied, chasing the Summer bee;
And there they wove a flower-chain to deck their golden hair;
I heard them sing a sweet song in the Summer air.

There came a youth and maiden walking by the stream,
Breathing sweet, honied love-words in their lovers' dream;
I saw a bride and bridegroom, hand in hand together,—
Enter on the world's way, for sun or stormy weather.

I saw a coffin carried to the cold churchyard;
And solemn were the words of the preacher that I heard;
They told of battle fought, and they told of victory won:—
The reaper had been reaping!—another day was done.

SONNET.

THIS Christmas night I sit alone,
All alone by a lone fireside;
I think of days long past and gone,
And pleasant all the memories glide.
The little laughing faces there,
That looked so bright in ribbons gay;
The songs that sounded everywhere
Around my house on Christmas Day.
These children now are grown to men
And women. Now they join the throng
Of other homes beyond my ken;
But still methinks I hear the song,—
The many songs that were so dear,
From voices I no more shall hear.

Christmas Night, 1872.

THE DEAR HOME WALLS WITHIN.

Draw close the curtains! light the lamp!
Heap fuel on the fire!
Shut out the darkness and the damp,
The cold rain and the mire.
While all without is gloom and doubt,
Sore suffering and sin,
Keep safe from harm, make bright and warm
The dear home walls within.

Let us forget the cold and wet,
The dark sad days we see,
The weary load, the dusty road,
The toil and miserie;
The men we meet in every street
Dishonest gains who 'd win;
Forget the care in life we share,
The dear old walls within.

The dear home walls, where memory calls
Up many a look of joy,
Glad mirth that fell like magic spell,
And love without alloy;
The faces, bright by warm firelight,
Seem speaking to me now,
With love that shone in years long gone,
When all was truth, I trow.

When all our days had sunny rays,—
Then happy hearts and free,— .
When sister, brother, gentle mother,
All joinèd in the glee;
Then nought was known of young hearts grown
So old with toil and sin;
No stormy night aroused our fright,
The dear home walls within.

When friends were there our joys to share,
And kisses sweet were given;
Those kisses sweet my heart did greet,
Like sunny rays from heaven.
And even now upon my brow,
Upon my cheek I feel
The gentle dip of loving lip—
The fancy is so real.

In these old walls oft memory calls
  Up pleasant thoughts to me,
Again the space holds many a face
  That I no more shall see ;
Save when at night, by warm firelight,
  I sit, and muse, and spin
The silken thread from days long dead,
  The dear old walls within.

Here, in the room, 'mid evening's gloom,
  Their spirits seem to dwell,
Where every nook, each stool and book,
  The loving tale can tell
Of childish ways, of student days,
  When busy lives begin—
With hope all fair, nor fear, nor care:
  The dear home walls within.

The timid girl, in life's swift whirl,
  Stands forth the blushing maid,—
While to her side a youth doth glide ;
  They whisper in the shade.
Now through the gloom of shaded room,
  Their faces seem to shine,
All strong to brave life's roughest wave,
  While true their hearts entwine.

Ah, well-a-day! years pass away,
And with them those we love;
With sigh and moan we mourn them gone,
That love-bonds round us wove;—
Their soft words hear in fancy's ear,
Their bright eyes now behold;
Those loved eyes dead that gladness shed,
Those warm hearts now so cold!

When those who weep have gone to sleep,
Forgetting all their care,
Forgetting toil and weary moil,
A respite brief to share;
When every sound in all around
Has ceased the busy din;
Then as I sit, kind spirits flit
The dear old walls within.

And ever near I seem to hear
Soft murmurs in the air;
They sing again the well-known strain,
Old words so true and fair;
From all around come holy sound,—
And holy words that tell
How near we stand to spirit-land,
And those we loved so well.

Again, again the busy brain
Makes fancy seem so real;
Where'er I look in every nook,
Some gladsome memories steal
Into my heart, and form a part
Of dream-life that I win
When fancy plays o'er long-past days,
The dear home walls within.

MY MOTHER.

My mother!—dearest name of all,
In fondest memory clinging;
It holds my willing heart in thrall:
'T is like a sweet voice singing—
Singing now with sweetest smile,
With sweetest whisper spoken;
Caresses that were all the while
Fond love-vows, never broken.

I hear the music by the sea,
On heathy moor and mountain,
In woody glade, on grassy lea,
By babbling brook and fountain;
'T is incense of a sweet perfume—
'T is sunlight ever shining:
That gives glad light in darkest gloom,
The black cloud's silver lining.

My mother!—name of hallowed love,
A music all unbroken,—
The choicest flowers in posies wove,—
A rhapsody unspoken!
Fond memory of a happy home,
Of mirthful games and story,
When little lightsome feet did roam
The woods in childish glory.

What gave each day its highest bliss?
'T was thy glad smile, my mother!
The looked-for prize, the loving kiss
To each young sister, brother.
Again, in fancy's dream, I see
The little children gather
All clust'ring round, on bended knee,
And learn to lisp "Our Father."

Again old Time the day brings round,
When thou away wert taken
When thou wert laid in cold, cold ground,
In GOD's love-light to waken;
'Mid storm and cloud that made thee weep,
'Mid winds and winter hoary,
Thy sweet eyes closed in Death's long sleep,
To ope in endless glory!

As life rolls on, with ebb and flood,
What fate doth joy or fret me?
I feel thee near, and sure I would
Not, if I could, forget thee.
While life shall last, thy name shall live,
Thine image never clouded;
My heart's best, deepest love shall give
Thee glory all unshrouded!

February 4th, 1871.

THE TIDE FLOWS ON FOR EVER.

Now SHALL we ply the busy oar?
  Oh, shall we ply for ever?
May we not rest us on the shore,—
  So sunny, from the river?

May we not stay to see the play
  Of children in the meadow,
Ere the cold hand of Care shall lay
  Upon their brow a shadow?

Or, by the kindly hearth to stand,
  To say farewell we tarry?
To grasp again the brother's hand,
  With love that ne'er can vary?

May we row back to sunny spots,
  To flow'ry groves and shady?
Gather the blue forget-me-nots,
  And give them to our lady?

Gaze on—gaze on in passing by,
List to the sweet voice singing;
See the dance as the moments fly;
Hark to the church bells ringing!

And sunny banks and shady groves,
Green leaves in sunlight dancing,
Glad Nature with its life and love,
Our inmost soul entrancing!

They fade away as we speed on:
We row quick down the river:
No turning back the way we 've gone!—
The stream flows on for ever!

No time to stop 'mid busy throng:
Returning—never! never!
The current bears us swift along
Down Life's fast-flowing river.

THE SNOWDROP.

I saw a snowdrop blooming through the snow,
When all around was bleak and bare;
Its pearly blossom hanging all so low,
No other bloom its life to share.

Nor simple daisy, nor the golden cup,
Nor violet, nor primrose pale,
Had yet come forth, or lift its blossoms up,
To deck the wild woods and the vale.

And once again I saw the snowdrop flower,—
Short, short its day of beauty there;
Though fit to deck a dainty lady's bower,
It sank beneath the wintry air.

And as the flow'r sank 'mid snowy pall,
There, in its quiet humble way,
It did a scene of life to me recall,
That shone but like a short-lived day.

I met a sweet young girl in tender years,
All fading in her early Spring;
Her life was spent in pining grief and tears;
She never heard the song-birds sing!

But in her heart she sang the song of life,—
The song of life that is to be;
When all the stormy battle and the strife,
When all the cold and miserie

We know, shall cease, and in their stead shall glow
The radiance of a heavenly grace;
While bright and brighter every moment grow
The joys and glories of the place;

Where angels all shall sing the song of love,
Where harpers harp the heavenly strain;
And all, in circling bands together wove,
Shall dance and sing their songs again.

Poor Bessie, born where gladness little came,
Where friends that she could love were few,
Where seldom she did hear the blessed Name
From which her only gladness grew;

In a poor street, amid smoke-tainted air,
With cold, and damp, and jarring sound,—
This timid girl grew like the snowdrop fair;
But ere her Summer had come round

She withered, sad to tell, and passed away!
She could not battle for her life;
She could not fight the rough and stormy way;
Her heart gave up the rugged strife.

So gently did she sink and fade away,
With aye a sweet smile for each frown;
Her loving eye proclaimed the coming day,
When she should wear an angel's crown.

E'en like a snowdrop bursting through the snow,
Her soul should rise away from earth,
Leaving the cold, dull, misty world below,
To hail with joy her heavenly birth!

NELLY BLYTHE.

I MET young Nelly Blythe a month ago,
Down in the meadow by the old Mill Farm;
Her step was falt'ring, slow, and pale her cheek,
Made paler still by widow's sombre garb
Of crape and shawl, and that white fringe she wore
Between her bonnet and her dark brown hair.
A kindly arm did lend her needful aid,
For strength was failing as her cheek was pale.
And by her side, scarce half a step behind,
There came a stout, young, ruddy village lass,
Who bore with loving care in her strong arms
A little tender babe of two months old,
With large bright hazel eyes, and sweet wee mouth,
Which, ever and anon, the mother stood
To gaze upon, and feed her hungry lips
With kisses on the darling's rosy cheek.

Sweet, bright young Nelly Blythe! so full of mirth
Ere sorrow came; and, oh! 't is woe to tell,

That sorrow came upon her youthful heart
Just when her life was budding into bloom,
And all the world seemed made to give her joy.

Young Nelly Blythe! the pride and life of home!
She stepped from maiden to the married life
As full of hope as ever was the heart
Of maiden when she gave her hand away;
And all these sanguine hopes, so ripe in love,
And all these sunny, rosy-tinted dreams,
That bore her down the pleasant path of time,
'Mid flowers and happy faces all around,
'Mid children's gambols and the heart's strong love,
How short a time 'twas Nelly's lot to share!
Too soon the dark cloud-shadow overcast,
And darkened all the dream that was so glad;
And ere the time that "Mother" was her name,
Poor Nelly! she no longer was a wife.

A bright glad day in sunny Spring beheld
Young Nelly at the altar plight her troth;
And all the village folks came out to see,
And clapped their hands; and little children, clad
All in their Sunday best, strewed rosy flowers
Upon the path, when Nelly Leigh did marry
Walter Blythe—he, as good and brave a man

As ever led a bride away from church,
Or at the altar spoke the solemn vow
To love and cherish her for weal or woe,
For rich or poor, throughout their whole life long.
And so in truth he did, though their "life long"
Was but a very shortened life indeed.

* * * * * *

It was a glad, bright, sunny Summer's day
When Walter Blythe was fain to journey out
A few short miles from his own happy home,
To visit a dear friend—the widow, old,
Of one his father loved and called his friend.
This lady now was lying very sick,
And needed that sweet comfort which we find
From timely visit and kind, tender care,
Which sympathetic minds, in hours of pain,
Can, without effort, show to those they love.
Thus, on a mission fraught with charity,
Forth went young Walter Blythe that Summer day,
All full of life and strength: the only grief
That touched his honest heart was that his wife,
Now busied with some light domestic cares,
On this occasion could not with him go.
So he, with many tender words of love,
With fond caress and whisper in the ear,—

With one last kiss, went forth upon his way,
As happy as a man in life could be.

With Nelly Blythe the day went smiling on,
Till near the time when Walter should return.
The heavens then became o'ercast with storm,
And awful thunder in the distance roared,
While lightning flashed and rain in torrents fell,—
And all the air, and all the flowery land,
Which erewhile had been beautiful to see,
Was now deformed and covered o'er with gloom,
And leafy fragments scattered all abroad.
But Nelly!—she had never fear nor thought
That danger could be working woe for her.

Not half of one short hour did live that storm:
Too fierce to last, it quickly died away.
Then opened up again the clear blue sky
Of heaven, smiling as though fain to soothe
And cheer, and nourish up again with care,
The flowers that had suffered from the rain;
And Nelly's face and heart were brightened both
To see the sunny smile which Nature shed
On all the varied living things around;
And she did sing a sweet, light, merry song;
In very overflow of youthful joy

And glad delight to see all things so fair.
Now, at this very moment of the day,
When all her heart was full of happy life,
There came a friend with look all scared and sad,
And muttered something which his faltering tongue
Did fail to find the proper words to say,—
But yet his pallid cheek and startled eye
Did speak to Nelly's heart a clearer sound,
And tell a clearer tale, that *he* was dead,
Than any words or any tongue could tell.
The colour fled her rosy-blushing cheek,
Ne'er to return again; the light glad song
Died out upon her palsied tongue—nor that,
Nor any other song of joy, was ever
More sung by her sweet, young voice.

For so it fell
That Walter Blythe, while on his homeward way,
Was overtaken by the lightning storm,
Which burst around the centre of his path;—
And one wild flash of lightning struck him down
A lifeless man, while the good beast he rode
Came scathless through without a hurt or harm.

They bore him home, this lifeless man and cold,
Home to the house which few short hours before

He 'd left in all the joy of manly life,
And full of hope and plans for coming time;—
Home to the house where joy should be no more.
And Nelly Blythe put on her widow's garb;
Short time to wear, short time for her to mourn.

To-day I saw her coffin borne along,
And mourning friends did follow in the rear;
They laid her down beside the one she loved,—
She loved the best of all she ever knew.

The church bell rang its solemn funeral note,
While the low murmur of the neighbouring sea
Did sing a requiem fitting to the time.

OLD FAMILIAR PLACES.

(Suggested by a walk from Regent's Park to Hampstead after reading Charles Lamb's "Old Familiar Faces.")

THE town runs out, out far away,
Further afield—out every day!
Its murky course is marked by blurred dark traces
O'er orchard ripe and meadow green,
O'er breezy heath, the copse between—
Destroying all the old familiar places.

The sweet green lanes so dear to me,
Where wild flowers grew all fair to see,
And roses hung with clustering tangled graces;
The fields, where lay the new-mown hay,
That scented all the Summer day—
All, all are gone! the dear familiar places.

The dell, where grew the primrose sweet,
Where lad and lass were wont to meet,
And whisper love with bashful glowing faces;
The village green, where we did play,
Where we did deck our Queen of May—
All now are gone! the old familiar places.

The woody knoll, where hazels grew,
The trysting-place for lovers true ;
Of these we find no green nor leafy traces ;—
The cottage sheltered by the hill,
The silvery stream, the busy mill—
All, all are gone ! the old familiar places.

The homestead and the dairy farm,
The roomy kitchen, bright and warm,
All filled at eve with mirth and happy faces ;
The big thatched barn with glossy floor,
Where we did dance in days of yore—
All gone ! the dear, dear old familiar places.

The spreading town sweeps all away :
The workshop stands where we did play,
And busy crowds move out with anxious faces ;
The woodman's axe has felled the tree ;
No more the primroses now we see
In all the dear, dear old familiar places.

But standing there, instead of these
Grand grassy fields and stalwart trees,
That decked the broad land out with sylvan graces,
Gaunt dwellings, with their stucco'd stare
Rise up in masses everywhere
In all the dear, dear old familiar places.

The town runs out on every side,
The town is stretching far and wide;
Field after field it ruthlessly embraces.
I turn away with sense of pain;
Where shall I seek to find again
Scenes like the dear loved, old familiar places?

NEW YEAR'S EVE.

The bell tolls in the dark midnight,
All dull and drear, all cold and sad;
Yet many times have we been glad
In this Old Year, when days were bright.

Have we not sported on the green,
And wandered the wild woods among,—
And listened to the song-bird's song,
When all was robed in golden sheen?

There in the bower, and by the stream,
Came music with the simple song;
We never thought the day too long,
Nor Summer night too short to dream.

But Summer days fade fast away,
And Autumn yields to Winter cold;
The old must yield, though e'er so bold,
And the Old Year he cannot stay.

The bells ring out! Time is flying!
Swiftly now it bears along
The young, the old, in motley throng,
And now the Old Year is dying.

Go out, Old Year, so stout and true!
Go, get thee gone, with snowy pall,
With heavy gloom of funeral,
With damp dead leaves thy path bestrew!

We bid thee now a sad farewell:
Then quick the glad New Year we greet,
All joyous beaming as we meet
In the next touch that Time can tell.

Thus ends the year: the new begins;
A little turn upon the stage!
Brief day from blooming youth to age—
The child is born—the death-bell rings.

So trips the little span of life;
The hours and days so quickly run,
From blushing morn to setting sun,
And happy hours alloyed with strife.

Till we stand, like the failing year,—
Our best days gone, the leaves all shed,
And rosy dreams and wild love fled,—
With head all frosted, old and sere.

We meet the change, we cease the strife,
The battle has been fought—and won?
Ah, whether won or lost, 't is done!
And we begin the new-born life.

Midnight, 1871-2.

A SUNNY WINTER DAY.

We hail the balmy breath of Spring,
The warm sun's ray, the sheep-bell's ring,
The twittering hedge birds' song, and the little lambs at play ;-
They tell us that the wintry blast,
With frost and snow, has gone at last ;—
And yet the sun shines bright and warm on many a Winter da

Next, Summer comes with cooling showers,
With leafy trees and varied flowers,
That deck the old world's mantle like a blooming garland gay
And then the shady, cool retreat
Doth often tempt our willing feet,
And we forget the bitter cold or sunny Winter day.

Then Autumn, with his stately brow
All laden with ripe fruits, will bow,
And ask that we should turn our hand to work instead of play
To garner up the plenteous yield
From orchard, vine, and harvest field,
That cheer the heart when Winter clouds shut out the sunny da

And thus the many seasons change,—
From bitter cold to Summer range;—
Such is the varied fate of man in this world's toilsome way;
And as in sorrow's darkest night
We often see a gleam of light,
So in the coldest Winter meet with many a sunny day.

And so this little life goes round!
We have our play, we till the ground,
And lend our willing aid to help a brother on his way:
We strive our best, till life is past,
To reach that sunny land at last
Where light is ever present, and there 's no cold Winter day.

A DREAM.

As in a dreamy sleep I lay,
  Strange fancies flitted through my brain ;—
And gentle music seemed to play—
  Crowds came and went, and came again ;
They filled the chamber with their throng,—
  With merry laughter rang the air ;—
And gladness shone with jest and song,
  And happy faces, bright and fair.
    The church bells rang ;
    The chorus sang ;
    And scented flowers,
    In sunny hours,
  Fell on the path in rosy showers.

A well-trimmed boat there seemed to glide
  So gently down a broad, smooth river ;
Its white sail stretching fair and wide,
  Seemed bright as though 't might flow for ever.
The boat sailed down the limpid stream,
  A gallant company it bore,

And each a wedding guest did seem—
One fair an orange garland wore.
There, all among,
Was mirth and song;
And great the glee
There seemed to be
Throughout that joyous company.

There, sailing on the river clear,
Now went the gallant boat along,
Until a woody wharf they near,
Where landed light the merry throng.
Sweet music met them on the shore,
And played glad strains of welcome there,
As guest by guest the chorus bore,
And gave good wishes, true and fair.
Oh, glad the day
Had passed away;
While every guest
Had done his best
To gladden all with song and jest.

Again the good boat stretched its sail,
And steered into the river wide;
One strong arm stood, 'mid calm or gale,
Through sun or storm the boat to guide;—

For out of all the merry throng,
Two, only two, did now remain:
The one was fair, the other strong,—
They vowed they ne'er would part again,—
But, hand in hand,
Together stand,
For weal or woe,
For high or low,
Together down Life's stream to go.

And he was stout and strong of limb—
Well fit to row and guide the bark;
And she, all truth and love for him,
To cheer his days if days were dark.
Oh, they were happy in their love!
Each held the other's heart in store;
And all in silken bands were wove
In fond, true love—they wished no more!
Thus happy, they
Sailed on, away,
Down Life's bright stream,
While sunny gleam,
Lightened their hours like fairy dream.

And when the adverse tide they stem,
Full oft they heard the music strain,

That friends on shore did play for them,
And gave the cheering shout again ;—
And they did hear the tinkling bells
Of flocks all browsing on the downs ;
The hum that busy day aye tells,—
That floateth from the busy towns :
Sounds—sorrow sad
Or labour glad—
Did float along :
Now grief, now song,
Or joyous shout from merry throng.

* * * *

A boat went sailing out to sea,
Sailing over the briny bar,
And lesser boats, all light and free,
Did watch it sailing out afar.
It sailed away towards the sun,
It sailed unto the fading light ;
And those on shore, as day was done,
Did watch it sink in darkening night.
And was it night ?
Or was it light ?
Oh, let us say,
Bright, cloudless day,
In the glad world, far, far away !

THE STORM.

A Fragment.

'T was Summer,—when the trees were green,—
When Nature's lovely face was seen
With beauty smiling everywhere,—
The green-clad earth, the sunny air :—
The brooklet sparkling in the light,
The mountain, with its heathy height ;
The balmy breeze came wafting o'er
The lofty downs, and fragrance bore
Of heather-bells and scented hay ;
It sang and laughed in wanton play,—
It kissed each bud and blooming flower,
The ivy clinging to the tower ;—
The flaunting rose had fond caress,
The daisy, in its lowliness,
It gaily gathered kisses sweet ;
And proud the blossoms were to greet
Their roving friend, the Summer breeze,
And grant, unchecked, what it did seize ;

The roses laughed, the daisies smiled,
The leaflets nodded light and wild;
The waving corn, the new-mown hay,
Sang out to greet the glorious day;
The birds were flitting to and fro,
And from the distant fields the low
Of kine was heard, and murmurs soft
Breathed gently through the grassy croft.
Here plenty flowed—the lot of all,
From humble cot to castle hall;
And all around seemed peace and love—
The earth, the air, the sky above.

But quick a change came o'er the scene—
And blackening clouds, where blue had been,
Came rolling up, and seemed to fly
Like giants 'cross the sunny sky;
Dark shadows fell on field and tree,
On flower and daisy-deckèd lea.
The lightning flashed!—fast fell the rain,
Beating to earth the ripening grain;
The sparkling green, the laughing flowers
Quivered beneath the thunder showers;
The little birds were stunn'd, and fell;
The raging storm, with furious yell,

Came swooping down the fruitful vale,
In driving rain, and blinding hail;
The waters like a deluge fell,
Deep-sounding as a funeral knell;
The sturdy oak and spreading plane
Were shivered by the hurricane;
The swollen river roared and rushed—
O'erflowed its banks, and onward gushed
Through bridge and gorge in furious haste—
Leaving the fruitful field a waste!

And when the sun shone out again—
When thunder-clouds and pouring rain
Had cleared away, and left the air
Serene and cool: the sky all fair,
All calm and blue, and sunny bright,
The foliage sparkling in the light—
How sad the scene on every side!
Destruction's hand shown far and wide—
Great boughs were broken from the trees,
That sang so light in Summer breeze;
Here cattle maimed, the fences torn,
That looked so trim at early morn;
Large fields of corn, that danced with glee,
Gladdening the heart and eye to see,

Lay shrunk and battered to the ground,
Like warriors struck with mortal wound;
There, near the road, a mighty oak
Stood, shivered by the lightning-stroke,
Its noble trunk all charred and torn,
Its mighty boughs to earth were borne;
And, at its base, a sadder sight
Revealed itself in piteous plight.—

There, stretched beneath the stricken tree,
A woman lay, all fair to see;
And at her breast a baby clung,
With a sad, wailing cry, that wrung
The heart to hear!—for no reply
The mother gave from tongue or eye,
Nor heaving motion stirred that breast
Whereto the tender infant prest.
She from the storm had shelter sought
Beside the tree—ne'er fearing aught
Could come to harm her while she stood
Behind that living mass of wood.
Ah! better brave the roughest rain
That scours across the open plain,—
Ah! better brave the tempest wild,
Than seek a shelter with thy child

Beneath that tree, whose branches high
Did lure the livid lightning nigh!—
The lightning came: the tree was reft;
The mother ta'en: the child was left.

COUNT NOT YOUR CHICKENS TILL THEY ARE HATCHED!

This quaint old proverb preaches stern and hard,—
Nor can we as a truth the words regard,
That tell us we shall have no midday dream,
Nor through the dark clouds see some sunny gleam.
No, no! I would not doom the man I hate
To such a hard or cheerless, cruel fate!
What! never build a castle in the air,
And deck it out with all that 's good and fair?
What! never spend the glittering, untold gold,
Bringing all those we love within our fold,

Nor deck with jewelled crown the one we love,
And silken robe with golden thread enwove,
That light and joy should sparkle ever there,
And loving heart beat constant without care?

Whether the head be silvered o'er with grey,
  Or rich brown locks hang round the blushing fair,
Let the fond dream run out its sunny way!
  Yes, let us build our castle in the air!
What though this castle tumble to the ground?
  What though the flowers may droop away and die,
And darkness cover that which fancy found
  As light and gladsome as the bright blue sky?
What though the waking see but scanty fare
  About the board, and poverty and pain,
And pale sad faces meet us everywhere,
  Which call us to our stern hard fate again?
Have we not had the hour of glad delight
  Which bore us far away from present things,
And made the world look jubilant and bright,
  A pleasant place where the glad song-bird sings;
The costly robe, the hospitable board,
  All laden with rich fruits and ruddy wine,—
The choicest viands on the table stored,
  Where clustering flowers the golden vase entwine;
Rich-cushioned ease in every corner seen,

And trusting dear ones gathering in our care,—
Bringing delight where sorrow erst had been,
The poor and needy in our wealth to share:
Glad joyous life in every corner found,
And happy faces smiling all around?

Have we not had this hour of boundless wealth
In gold, in mansion, and in fertile land,
Which we have spent in giving joy and health,
And scattering bounties with an open hand?
Nor scant the sum, nor the recipients few,
With kindly words then ever on our lip,—
Far better, chance, than we could ever do
Had all been sterling gold within our grip.
Perhaps these sunny dreams that look so fair,
Which through the brain in pleasant fancies flow,
May clear the path of many a cankering care,
And make the world's rough wheels more smoothly go

No, no! I would not make such stern decree,
Nor rob the toiler of a dream so fair;
Let rich and poor, each in their own degree,
Go build their sunny castles in the air.

THE FISHERMAN'S WIFE.

The fisherman's wife was sitting alone,
Alone on the yellow sand;
A laughing baby lay on her lap,
The mother was kissing its hand.

The mother was kissing its rosy cheek,
And stroking its golden hair,—
She sang and prattled in words of love,
Her heart was light as the air.

She sat and she laughed—oh! she crowed and sang,
She toyed with her baby bright,
And she saw not the heavy low'ring cloud
That came rolling up like night.

Now the wind that played with the curly locks,—
That tossed them to and fro,—
It sighed and moaned, and now began
In louder, wilder gusts to blow.

And the cloud grew on from a little speck
Till it covered the heavens fair:
A shadow fell on the fisherman's wife
And her child with the golden hair.

The cloud grew blacker and blacker still,
With a wild and angry form;
The young wife pressed her child to her breast,
To shelter it from the storm.

Now the waters roared, the wild winds blew,
The waves were crested with foam,
Breakers were dashing upon the beach
Ere the fisherman's wife got home.

And the lightnings flashed, and the thunders rolled,
The wind made the waters wild;
They roared on the rocks, they dashed on the sand,
But reached not the fisherman's child.

For the fisherman's child was safe from harm,
Safe in its own mother's breast:
She mingled her song with the wild wind's roar,
And lulled her baby to rest.

ROW DOWN THE RIVER.

Row, row down the river,
  Away from its source—
On to the mighty sea,—
  Steady on your course.
Keep in the mid-stream,
  Swiftly glide along—
Swiftly through the waters—
  With steady stroke and strong!
Gladly as you sail away
Through the limpid, silvery way,
Songs of mirth and minstrels play—
  Sailing down the river.

Row, row, and keep away
  From creek and shallow:
Keep still a watchful eye
  For dangerous hollow;
Away from weedy banks,
  From curling eddy;

Guide the barque with sure eye,
Firm stroke and steady—
Ever watchful on your way,
Whether it be sad or gay,
Darkest night or lightest day—
Sailing down the river.

Life, like the flowing tide,
Ever rolls along!
Nor will one moment stay
The sunny banks among;
But flows on its steady course,
Heedless what may be—
Whether for weal or woe,
Grief, or revelrie.
Ever keep a watchful eye,
As Life's tide is gliding by;
Time on rapid wings doth fly,
While we sail down the river.

THE SEASONS.

Bright, merry Spring, that dances and laughs;
Now little fits of weeping,
That quickly pass, then a sunny smile
Comes through the branches peeping.

Glad Summer next, with its long, warm days,
With cool, refreshing showers;
Night slowly comes—night quickly goes:—
It only stops to kiss the flowers.

Then Autumn, mellow, and rich, and warm,
The earth with plenty heaping;—
Rich, luscious fruits from every tree—
Golden fields and reapers reaping.

Chilly and cold doth the Winter come:
Now glad—now melancholy;
Chilly and cold he 'll totter away,
His grey locks decked with holly.

REFLECTIONS.

THE WORK WE DO.

It matters little what our length
Of days on earth may be,—
Whether in life's early Spring,
Or at ripe maturity,
We halt upon the winding road,
Lay down the load
Our shoulders bore,
Put off the garb our spirits wore.

But oh! it matters much indeed
How we employ the day,—
The time committed to our charge
To use as best we may;
How the golden hours are spent,
Which are but lent,
For we must give
Account for every day we live.

Pure, high, and holy, loving deeds
Short life we need to do;
A very little span of life
Will prove the heart is true;
A heart of metal pure and bright,
Its pulses right,—
Its acts are seen
In years long after it has been.

Are we not told that we must work
While it is called day,
For that the night comes quickly on,—
How quickly, who shall say?
Night cometh, when no work is done,
Man's course is run,
The last hour come,
And he is carried to his home.

And all the work that we have done,
For evil or for good,
The hallowed duties here performed,
Temptations well withstood,
Shall shed their influence here on earth,
And give a birth
Which ne'er shall die,
But live through all eternity.

Then labour hard and do thy work;
Still carry on thy burden;
And, when the time for reckoning comes,
Thou shalt receive thy guerdon;
For, if thy work is ably done,
Thy race well run,
I will engage
Thou shalt receive a liberal wage.

Work gladly in the cause of GOD,
Be ready in the right;
Whate'er thy hands shall find to do,
Aye do it with thy might;
And ask thy Father every hour,—
(GOD in His power
Will answer you),—
"Father, what wilt Thou have me do?"

In struggling through the busy crowd
We cannot all take foremost place;
Some stumble, while some lag behind,
Some distanced in the race:

Take comfort, though THOU hast not won :
If thou hast done
In every sense
Thy best, thou shalt have recompense.

What matter, though we in the race
Should not the favoured victors be?
What matter, though we labour long,
And lack the promised fee?
What matter, though the road be hard,
And small reward
On earth we get,
And smiles with angry frowns are met?

What matter, though through years of life
We struggle hard to win the prize,
And men should fail, through jealousy,
Our worth to recognize?
Though men should beat our spirits down
With word and frown,
Be this our fence,—
'T is GOD that gives the recompense.

Wait thou the leisure of the Lord,
He is thy safest surety;

What though thy darling project fail?
Be strong, and He will comfort thee.
Thy hallowed object still pursue;
Remember too
This motto's sense—
"'T is GOD that gives the recompense."

LIFE IN THE WORLD.

A Question and an Answer.

"Is it all up-hill?"—CHRISTINA ROSSETTI.

AND is it all rough road?
Is it all weary way?
All watching in the night
And toiling in the day?

Struggling with the fierce wind,
Or fighting with the foe?
Rough road and thorny path,
And grief to undergo?

There is much, much up-hill,
  There is sore toil and woe;
Smothered with the hot dust,
  Or shivering through the snow.

But 't is not all rough toil;
  Bright sunny spots are found,
Cool sheltered shady groves,
  With blossoms blooming round.

Rippling brooks cool the air
  And glad the weary eye,
Torches light the hill-top,
  Stars glitter in the sky.

While we 're toiling up-hill,
  Or loit'ring by the way,
Oh, let us not forget
  That we must watch and pray!

HOPE.

Hope! what should we do here on earth without thee?
How could we live, how should we die,
If from our grasp thou wert to fly,
And leave us all alone to sigh,
And wail, and cry, not knowing aught about thee?

Hope! thou 'rt the guiding star, the beacon light
That cheers the traveller's stormy way,
Makes short the bondsman's weary day;
He forward looks to thy bright ray,
Shining in glory through the world's dark night.

Hope! from our earliest years to tottering age,
Our friend thou 'lt never cease to be!
The maiden at the altar, see
Her bright eyes sparkling full of thee,
Thou constant friend in life's long pilgrimage.

Hope! joy and gladness in the cheering sound!
The sailor on the stormy sea,
Through thy bright light, his home doth see;
The patriot's heart is warmed by thee,
When tyranny and rapine reign around.

Hope! ever blessèd be that name of love!
See the poor crushed, sin-broken man,
How in his last extreme he can
Still cling to thee, and fearless scan
His chance of promised rest in heaven above.

Glad Hope! we will cling to thee, and never
Shalt thou from our firm faith depart,
Thou Angel of the human heart!
A heaven-born gift to man thou art!
In life, till death, will we hope on for ever.

PEACE.

Oh! is there peace for the heavy heart—
For the tossed on this world's tempestuous sea?
For those who shall seek "the better part,"
Who stand in the fight where many do flee?

And is there rest for the weary-worn,
Who are bowed to the earth with weight of woe?
For those adrift from the night till morn,
That lie bleeding and crushed in the Winter snow?

Who toil in the trench, nor murmur nor sigh?
Who charge when the shot is hailing around?
Who brave the sea when the tempest is high?
Who ready go where the dying are found?

A harbour is marked on the pilgrim's chart,
A beacon burning high up in the height,—
An anchor is fixed that never shall part,
A gleam in the sky on the darkest night!

Though alone in the fight, and few we save,
Though we gather 'mid storms the harvest sheaves,
Victory shall crown the brow of the brave,
And peace shall be found in the laurel leaves.

TIME TO REST.

Man! ere thou rest thy busy hand,
Or close thine eye upon the scene,
Let some good work, by thee performed,
Tell future time that thou hast been.
Whate'er thy hand shall find to do,
Aye do it with thy very best,
That thou may'st, with contented mind,
Then gently fold thy hands and rest.

VANITY.

Vanity ! vanity !
The preacher saith that all the world
Is altogether vanity !
There 's nothing new that is not old—
Nothing to tell that 's not been told ;
Each well-laid scheme that we unfold,
Is altogether vanity.

Vanity ! vanity !
Each worldly act, each worldly thought,
Is altogether vanity !
And all the knowledge we profess,
And all the power we possess,
When justly weighed, we must confess,
Is altogether vanity.

Vanity ! vanity !
The gayest robe with gems bedecked,
Is altogether vanity.
Great wealth, as plenteous as the day,
Rough, manly strength which nought can stay—
E'en beauty, with its sunny ray—
Is nothing else than vanity.

Vanity ! vanity !
Now let us weigh these weighty words,
That say each thing is vanity ;
And if the preacher argues right,
And we are groping here in night,
Then, let us seek that world of light,
Where life 's no longer vanity !

CONSOLATION.

When grief lies heavy on the heart,
When tears fall heavy from the eye,—
When all the world is dark and drear,
And clouds obscure the bright, blue sky,—
When friend, whose love was very life,
Lies cold and dead, to smile no more,—
When all around the angry waves
Beat madly on the dreary shore,—
Then fall these sweet, consoling words,
Like dew of morn, on heart oppressed :

"Come unto Me, ye weary ones,
And I will give you rest."
Oh, heavy heart, let sorrow cease:
The Lord of life doth promise peace!

SLEEP!

Yes!—we shall sleep the long, sweet sleep,
And wake no more to weeping;
The sky shall shine ethereal blue—
Song-birds their matins keeping;
And centuries o'er this world shall roll,
While we lie peaceful sleeping.

TO JOSIAH RUMBALL, ESQ.,

On his completing his Seventieth Year.

THREESCORE years and ten?—
Threescore years and ten!—
A journey long to contemplate,
But short—how short!—when
Time hath passed us o'er the space:
Fleeting time swift-flying—flying!
How swift appears the hurried race—
Grey hairs upon the brow now lying!

Honour to grey hair!
Now no more the care
You met in threescore years and ten,
Be it yours to share.
May length of happy days be thine—
A thankful, quiet, green old age;
May many friends around thee twine,
To cheer thee on thy pilgrimage.

Honour to thy years—
Threescore years and ten!
May all glad joy, and never tears,
Come within thy ken.
I know the way of life has been
Through dusty road and toilsome day,
Yet thou hast found some spots of green—
Some flower-beds blooming by the way.

The road hath oft been up the hill,
All steep and toiling—
Steep, steep and toiling—
Requiring all thy strength of will
To check recoiling.
But roughest place has been got o'er,
The stormy day been weathered through;
Forget these—let fond Memory store
But the bright spots where blossoms grew.
These sunny spots the mind will best
Remember when all else is lost:
Friends dearly loved—some gone to rest—
And one—the one you loved the most—

A halo resting round her head,
Shining in glory—
Shining in glory!—
A radiance o'er thy path hath shed:

'T is an old story.
But that shall be thy beacon light—
Its joyous ray shall never cease,
But guide thee through the stormy night,
To days of holy rest and peace!

The time of life that meets thee now—
Threescore years and ten!
Threescore years and ten!—
The marks are on thy honoured brow:
A life well spent! Then
Honour dwells with silvery grey,
And wisdom rare doth come as well,—
Stern rectitude in all thy way,
As all who knew thee right can tell.
May, in the days thou yet shalt live,
No troubled thoughts disturb thy rest;
But on man's never-failing Friend
Repose thy hope of endless rest.

March 17th, 1863.

AT A BROTHER'S DOOR.

In dull, grey light of early Summer morn—
Ere yet the sun, in all its blaze of light,
Above the distant, solemn, high hill-top
Did shine, or stir the busy world to life
And glorious day—at that cool, silent hour,
I, standing at a brother's open door,
Saw there, with pleased eye, before me spread—
All sheltered in pale purple, misty fringe—
The mountain, meadow, and the woody copse;
The nestling cottage and the orchard fair,
Where each gnarled trunk and twisted bough did seem,
With varied blossom, all a-bloom—with promise
Of plenty when the Autumn should come round;
Green lanes and roadside banks were covered o'er
With yellow primrose, foxglove, and bluebell—
With "ragged robin" nodding in their midst;
The white and pink May blossom blending there,
Filling with their sweet scent the early morn;
The rivulet and river rolling on

To the broad sea, where boats and ships together
Lay lazy rocking on their silvery bed.

Then as I stood alone, and yet, methought,
Surrounded by good company and song—
For every leaf, and bough, and waving flower,
Sang out a song that fell upon mine ear,
Like to a well-known voice that I did love—
I heard the murmuring of the distant sea,
And all the air was full of life and joy;
The flap of wings that flitted to and fro,
And sounds of chirping song, full sweet, from those
Small throats that sang their morning hymn of praise—
Chasing the dull, dark gloom from out the woods,
Where all night long the frog's dull croak had been,—
Waking the day to life, and love, and joy:
When happy children chase the Summer bee,
And busy men seek glory in dull gold.

I stood a moment at that open door,
To breathe the fragrance of the early morn,
Which fell like dew upon my heavy heart;
For all the night had I been watching there,
Sitting beside a dying brother's bed,
Where women wept—for, true, their hearts did tell
The loved one there would quickly be no more.

We saw the dear life fleeting fast away;
The eyes were slowly closing into night;
The soul, we knew, would wake to glorious day.
We heard the heavy sigh—the stifled groan,
And words that told of weakness and of pain;
Yet calmly there upon his bed he lay.
He knew, to die was better life to gain—
To leave the suffering and the pain we feel,
In bright, ethereal life for aye to dwell!

Carlton Green,
May 21st, 1869.

THE OLD LIFE AND THE NEW.

NEAR the close of a wintry day,
I, sitting by a sore sick-bed,
Heard on the floor some light steps tread,
And gladsome words the comer say.

And she who came brought tidings sweet,
That now another child was given,
All fresh and pure, the gift of Heaven,
A loving mother's joy to greet.

O happy mother! father! there
To welcome this new pledge of love,
With thanks and prayer to Heaven above,—
To keep it aye from pain and care;

To guard it through its journey-way,
To make it in this world a light,
The great life-battle strong to fight,
All good to help, all evil slay.

And I did join the holy prayer,
While sitting by the sick man's bed,—
Soothing the dear-loved, hoary head,—
Watching the pulse then ebbing there.

How strange the course of life doth run!
My brother's house is filled with praise,
For him who now begins his days;—
I watch a life that 's nearly done.

A life drawn out to longest span,
All spent in good and honest strife,
From first to last a noble life!—
God bless the child, God save the man

January 15th, 1871.

ON THE DEATH OF A BROTHER'S CHILD.

How strange doth God His mercies show
To those He surely loves full well!
Why joy should ever ebb or flow?
Why pain or grief?—Ah, who can tell?

Why showers of bliss at times should fall,
Then deepest sorrow be our lot;
This we in life must oft recall,
And on the bright page find a blot.

Why we should mourn, why we should joy,
Why health and plenty some should share,
Why some have bliss without alloy,
Why some find misery, want, and care.

Oh, let us bow with humble heart,
With lowly mind to His behest;
Though it should be a bitter part,
The God of love, He knoweth best.

Lo! here, while joy is in the place,
The stealthy messenger doth come,—
With noiseless step and shrouded face,
He comes to spoil a happy home,

And ruthless strides the threshold o'er—
Do what we will, he 'll have no "Nay"—
The one choice flower he asks, no more,
And with the prize he stalks away.

Grim messenger of Death! how cold,
How cold and bloodless there he stands!
All speechless, calm, yet, ah! how bold
He still persists in his demands!

The poor wee thing we loved so well,
That we had set our hearts upon,
That messenger so dour and fell
In silence takes, and he is gone.

Gone from the eyes, but not the heart:
Ah, we shall hear his sweet voice sing
In that bright land where none shall part,
But all their hallelujah bring;—

And raise their voice in gladsome song,
All singing of the Saviour's love;

As each new-comer joins the throng,
New strains shall swell the choir above.

There child shall meet the mother dear,
There father, mother, meet the child;
There Death shall never raise a fear,
Nor terror make the poor heart wild.

But all in peace, the happy throng
Shall mingle there the songs of praise
To Him who loves the weak, the strong—
The GOD of everlasting days.

December 24th, 1871.

ON THE SAME.

ONE of a happy circle there
Of goodly youths and maidens fair.—
I strung a rhyme when he was born,
It was in cold and wintry morn;
I string one now that he has died,—
The Old Year passing as he sighed,

So gently, his last failing breath,
And passed away to early death!
The New Year broke all calm and free—
Oh, what a glad New Year had he!
He saw it break in Angel-land,—
He saw the host together stand—
Around the Throne in glory bright,
With golden harps and golden light,
Singing aloud their songs of praise
To GOD, the GOD of endless days!
Oh, precious hour! that now to heaven
Another spotless soul is given,—
To live in joy, and watch and wait
With loving look at heaven's gate;—
To welcome those he knew on earth,
Who, waiting, welcomed there his birth;
Who loved and nursed him to the last,
And mourned when his pure spirit passed
Away to realms of endless joy!
But yet rejoiced that their dear boy
Is living now in peace and love,
With all the heavenly host above;
And never more shall sorrow know,
Nor pain, nor care, nor crushing woe!

IN MEMORIAM.

January 10th, 1873.

AGAIN! and now another gone—
And thus "friend after friend departs;"
Not all the skilled and cunning arts
Can keep them here: the tide flows on.

The Brother that we loved so well,—
To him of kindly word and heart,—
The call has come: he must depart,
And we the loss in sorrow tell.

Dear Brother! Here we mourn thee gone,—
We miss thee as the time comes round
When we were joyed to hear the sound
Of merry laugh, which thou alone

Couldst raise to make the welkin ring;
The firm warm grasp of thy dear hand,
As, one by one, the "Brother band"
Did ever their glad welcomes bring.

And thou art gone! No more shall we,—
With all thy joy and sunny smile,
That made each heart right glad the while,—
In this cold world thy dear face see.

The common phrase!—The plaintive cry
Of man when stricken with disease
From which he can get no release
Is this—"I fear that I shall die!"

He cannot die! Man never will!
The fleshly house he owned will die,—
And in the cold, cold grave must lie,
But he—the man—is living still!

Man never dies!—His day is done;
He casts the garb he wore away;—
From this dull earth to endless day
He passeth!—and his wage is won!

We see him not, we do not hear
His voice among the crowd we meet;
No more with grasp or word we greet
That presence which was wont to cheer.

The tenant from the house has gone!—
The mansion moulders to decay,—
Its glory now has passed away,
And all is dark where light has shone.

But there 's a world, all strange and new,—
Farther than human sense can see,—
Enwrapt in wondrous mysterie,
Yet passing fair, and bright, and true;

And in that world, my Brother dear,
To which we journey fast away,
There we, when dawns the glorious day,
Thy face shall see, thy voice shall hear.

* * * * *

May 1st, 1873.

To-day I heard the doleful bell,
That told another loved one gone;
Now bright eyes weep where gladness shone,
And manly hearts their sorrow tell.

Here Death again with cold, cold hand,
Hath come and beckoned her away—
That she may stand in bright array
Before the throne where Angels stand!

Long, long her suffering here—how sad!
We saw her wasting day by day;
At length her spirit passed away
To that bright world where all is glad,—

Where all the noble work that 's done
On earth—where every noble thought—
Where every gallant fight that 's fought,
Whether the battle 's lost or won,—
Shall have reward—shall win the prize:
The crown of life beyond the skies!

MARY.

A LEAF fell from the dusty book I read!—
That withered leaf, it told to me of Mary;
When it was plucked from the flowering tree,
Oh, she was like a joyous, lightsome fairy.

Long past-gone years come up before me now,
That day when these old eyes did last behold her:
The blush of youth was blooming on her cheek—
Her clust'ring dark hair streaming o'er her shoulder:

As up the valley we together went,
With merry joy on sunny Summer morning,
To gather from their soft green mossy beds,
The flowers with varied hue these banks adorning.

Now hand in hand—now climbing up the steep—
Two lovers we, as blithe as she was fair;
She decked me out with choicest rosy flowers.
I twined the lily in her rich brown hair.

Then sat we down to rest awhile, and read,
And there we took our favourite poet's book ;
The tall trees wove their branches overhead,
And at our feet did run the rippling brook—

Laughing and babbling o'er its stony bed,
Seeming to sing a sweet glad silvery song,
While it did mirror flower and spreading tree,
The sunlight dancing, as it swept along.

The daisy and the gaudy golden cup
Did dapple all the green sward o'er the lea ;
We heard the song-bird singing in the air,
We heard the ring-dove cooing in the tree.

Oh, happy hour ! oh, happy time and true !
How joyous did the day-hours pass away !—
The song, the laugh, the resting by the brook
From morn till eve—one long bright happy day !

And we did linger out this hour of life :
We let the sun go down behind the hills
In blush of glory, e'er we turned our steps
For home—all joy—no thought of coming ills ;

No thought that Fate was weaving such a web
Of sorrow that would tangle all our ways:
No thought that Fate was raising such a storm,
That sunlight ne'er again should glad our days.

Long years have passed—and that same favourite book,
I could not take it in my hand again—
I could not look upon its simple page,
Without a rush of agonizing pain.

My home, and all the pleasant memories round.
Became to me a load, a heavy gloom;
I saw a withered heart, a blighted life,
In every field—in every lighted room;

Within a week of that sad tale they told,
Away I fled from native land and home;
Leaving behind my own green cherished fields—
In the wide world a wanderer to roam:

Leaving behind the rich woods and the lea,
The brooklet and the banks where wild flowers grew:
Leaving behind each hope of fair renown,
Because they told me Mary was untrue.

Mary untrue! and would another's be!—
Another's! whom she loved the best of all!
As though a bolt from heaven had struck me down—
I, groaning, writhing, on the ground did fall!

Then, mad at heart and all my brain on fire,
Away I rushed—nor gave one look behind:
Away—I cared not where my course might lead.
Only another, distant place to find:

Away—past river and by smoky town:
Away—o'er land and o'er the stormy tide—
Anywhere!—If I only might forget
That she was promised for another's bride.

They told me, when I said I 'd go away
And leave the dear loved land where she did dwell,
"Yes, go; and 'mid the change of scene, forget
The maid unworthy of the love you tell."

Forget! forget!—oh, is it given to man,
That he can wipe, at will, the tablet clean,
And leave again the brain and heart all bright,
As though the deep red mark had never been?

Forget! forget!—can we forget the pain,—
The time when hot tears made the pillow wet?
No! Time may make the bleeding wound a scar,
But never can the wounded heart forget.

Long years have passed, and I've a wanderer been;
My feet no lengthened resting-place could know—
Climbing the slippery, snow-clad mountain-side,
And wandering where the palm and plantain grow.

From cities where great ruined temples stand—
Where Indian monarchs rule with gorgeous state:
From arid wastes, with thousand miles of sand—
Returned I, yesterday, to learn her fate.

I yesterday did seek the old churchyard,
And, Mary, saw thy name engraven there;
And after "Mary" was another name—
A name that thou for short, short time didst bear.

'T was yesterday I took the book to read,
And, opening there, the withered leaf did fall:
'T was thy young rosy fingers placed it there,
That we the pleasant passage might recall.

Oh, yes! my withered heart with joy recalls
The sunny hours that glad day's life did give;
To me 't will be the one green spot of joy,
To cheer the few short days I yet may live.

Oh, was I wrong to rush, with headlong speed,
Away, dear love, without one word from you?
Perhaps the words breathed in my jealous ear
Were vilely false, or only partly true.

Perhaps, if we had met and I had spoken,—
What though another's wish had come between?
Perchance, the other's spell had then been broken,
And our two lives had never blighted been.

Thy father, Mary, with his cold, hard heart,—
Whose soul loved only wide-spread lands and gold,—
Perhaps he might have yielded to thy tears—
Have yielded, had my love-words e'er been told.

But my warm heart rebelled against the man:
I could not brook his cold, imperious stare—
His haughty words, his curled contemptuous lip—
Scorn—but for thee that I could ever bear.

They tell me now that thou wert driven to wed
This man—not thine, but thy hard father's choice;
He loved him for his wealth, his broad green fields—
He would not hear his daughter's pleading voice.

And I, like coward traitor, ran away
And left thee undefended to the foe,—
That they might drag thee, all against thy will,
To perjur'd rite, to gilded couch—and woe!

Forgive that angry heart of mine, my Mary,
That I should ever think thee false to me:
I should have stayed and fought the tyrant down,
And saved thee from a life of misery.

False, angry heart—weak coward that I was!—
But oh, forgive! that thus I did rebel:
The words were told, and I believed them true;
Mary, they were our young life's funeral knell.

The only rumour that e'er reached my ear
Was, that thou wert a happy wedded wife;
Oh, how my heart did beat and bound with pain,
When came this fresh-culled sorrow to my life!

And God was very kind in thy sore need ;
He took thee early to Himself away ;
But me !—the coward, that I left thee so,
He doomed that I for many years should stay—

Suffering the pangs of what I thought to be
A true heart slighted by a false heart—thine ;
Rich fruit was ashes, and the honey draught
To others' lips, was bitter gall to mine.

A pining sorrow, and a discontent
With every outward thing I came to see,
Or touch, or taste ; nor would it let me go,
Wherever I might rest, or turn to flee.

I feel, and now I bow to meet my fate :
'T was just, the burthen He has on me laid—
That I must bear the stricken heart of grief
Until the utmost farthing shall be paid.

The utmost farthing, Mary, shall be paid !
Yes, gladly now would I lay down my life,
Darling, for thee ! I know that thou wert true
In love, e'en though thou wert another's wife.

And now I know the suffering that I bore,
From my proud heart and heated fancy grew;
But knowledge came too late—too late to me:
'T was only yesterday I knew thee true.

'T was only yesterday that I was told
How sorry sad thy poor young life had been;
'T was only yesterday they told me how
The roses on thy cheek were never seen.

But like a lily pale and drooping, all
So sad, and seeming without care of life;
'T was only yesterday I knew how soon
Thy poor crushed heart gave up the weary strife.

'T was yesterday I took the book to read,—
The withered leaf fell fluttering to the floor;
I put it back within the sacred leaves,
Where thy soft hand had placed it years before.

I laid it like a precious jewelled thing—
Most precious thing my memory now can hold—
The one green spot of joy in long life past,
More rich than spreading lands or shining gold.

There lie! to mark the page which *we* did read
That sunny day, all free from coming pain:
There lie! and be the token of our love
Till we in brighter worlds shall meet again!

LOVE SONGS.

WILLIE.

When we began our life of love,
How bright the world did seem, Willie!
Green grass below—blue sky above!
'T was like a fairy dream, Willie.
The sun shone bright on summer morn,
As, wending through the ripening corn,
Thy whispered words I could not scorn,
But owned my love to thee, Willie.
Oh, I was happy in my love,
Willie, Willie;
Through weal or woe, I 'd never rove
From thee, Willie!

We 've wandered o'er the desert wide
Since that glad sunny day, Willie ;
And we have crossed the stormy tide,
To distant lands away, Willie.
All hand-in-hand, along the road,
We aye have borne each other's load ;
For oft the stream of life hath flow'd
With shadows dark o'ercast, Willie.
But stormy cloud or bright sunshine,
Willie, Willie,
Has never changed thy love, nor mine
For thee, Willie.

Amid the changing scenes of life,
Some shadows have a part, Willie ;
But we have kept, through storm and strife,
Love's sunshine in our heart, Willie.
Though spirits faint and strength should fail,
And toil should make the cheek grow pale,
My heart shall never moan nor wail,
While I journey on with thee, Willie !
Oh, I 'll wander o'er the wild moor,
Willie, Willie !
O'er desert waste and wild moor,
With thee, Willie.

MY BONNIE BESSIE.

I LOVED thee in thy sweet Spring-time,
My darling Bessie,
And ever vowed to be but thine,
My own Bessie!
It was on a sunny morning,
As we sat upon the stile,—
With your roses and your dimples
You did my heart beguile:
These merry smiles that dance and play
Round thy lips, Bessie,
'T was they that stole my heart away,
Sweet, charming Bessie!

I loved thee in thy Summer-time,
My bonnie Bessie,
When we were young and in our prime,
Bright, blooming Bessie!
When all the world was fair and light,
When hope was strong and cheering,
I cared not then for storm or frown,
With thy fond love endearing.

The world might rage and angry be,
My own kind Bessie;
I aye found joy at home with thee,
Warm-hearted Bessie!

And now the Autumn of our days,
My own wife, Bessie,
Fills all our path with golden rays,
Kind, gentle Bessie!
Thy cheek to me blooms just as fair
As when life was in sunny Spring,
Thy simple song, in accents sweet,
Doth happy memories bring.
We 'll saunter now down the green lane,
Dear, hopeful Bessie,
And live our youthful days again,
My dear wife, Bessie.

And when our Winter days are here,
My darling Bessie,
And when the close of life draws near,
My own bright Bessie,
We 'll draw our chairs close to the fire,
Nor think of long-past care or sorrow,
But talk of time that 's coming fast,
When all is shining, bright "to-morrow,"—

When joy shall banish care and pain,
My darling Bessie,
When nought but peace and blessings reign
For me and Bessie.

THE EMIGRANT'S SONG.

I 'm coming back to thee, Mary,—
I 'm coming back to thee;
Fresh blow the breeze, wide stretch the sail,
Fast may the good ship flee:
I fear not frowning rock nor gale,
While coming back to thee, Mary!

Long weary years have rolled away
Since last I bade thee, love, farewell:
The anguish of that doleful day
Nor heart nor tongue can ever tell.
When waves were rough and wild winds blew,
The heavy hours would flee, Mary,—
It nerved my drooping heart anew
Whene'er I thought of thee, Mary.

I 'm coming back to thee, Mary,
I 'm coming back to thee;
Fresh blow the breeze, wide stretch the sail,
Fast may the good ship flee:
I fear not frowning rock nor gale,
While coming back to thee, Mary!

Oft, when I climbed the mountain high,
To gaze across the broad, dark sea,—
Then memory pictured to mine eye
Kind friends at home so dear to me.
And you all in the centre there
My glistening eye did see, Mary:
Oh, then I longed those scenes to share,
And once more be with thee, Mary!
I 'm coming back to thee, Mary,
I 'm coming back to thee;
Fresh blow the breeze, wide stretch the sail,
Fast may the good ship flee:
I fear not frowning rock nor gale,
While coming back to thee, Mary!

Once, when the fever held me sore,
There, stretched upon my lowly bed,
I thought that I should never more
Lift up my heavy, aching head!

Ah, slow the weary hours went by,
And sad the time to me, Mary;
When kindly sleep then closed mine eye,
Dreams brought me back to thee, Mary.
I 'm coming back to thee, Mary,
I 'm coming back to thee;
Fresh blow the breeze, wide stretch the sail,
Fast may the good ship flee:
I fear not frowning rock nor gale,
While coming back to thee, Mary!

Now long, long years have passed away,
And now 't is "Ho for home!" once more,—
I hail with joy the happy day
When I shall reach my native shore,—
When I may roam on Summer days,
The shady woods to see, Mary,—
The "sunny banks and flowery braes,"
And welcome have from thee, Mary.
I 'm coming back to thee, Mary,
I 'm coming back to thee;
Fresh blow the breeze, wide stretch the sail,
Fast may the good ship flee:
I 'm coming from a distant land,
Across the stormy sea, Mary!

FORGET THEE, ANNIE!

Forget thee, Annie! Never! No;
Oh, I can ne'er forget thee;—
The brooklet may forget to flow,
Where last, dear love, I met thee;—
The flow'ret may forget to bloom,
The star forget to shine:
While throbs this heart, in light or gloom,
Its last throb shall be thine.

When last I met thee, Annie dear,
The stars were bright above me;
My heart did, trembling, bound to hear
Thee sigh, and say, "I love thee:"
I 'll ne'er forget the happy hour,
Whatever fate beset me:
Or Fortune smile, or Fortune low'r,
I never shall forget thee.

Forget thee, Annie! Thou hast sought,—
Yes, thou hast said, "Forget me;"
As though my soul could bear the thought,
Or would, if heart could let me;—

No, no! through this life's tortuous maze,
Whatever fate shall fret me,
Thy face the star to which I gaze:
I never can forget thee!

Long happy years may be thy lot;
And mine short years of sorrow:
I lay me down, by all forgot—
No hope of joy to-morrow;—
Except to fancy thee, sweetheart,
In all thy sunny gladness,
Thy joyous youth, with guileless art,
But never time of sadness.

I 'll image thee in every stage
Of life,—or bright or homely;
To matron in thy silvery age,
Thy brown locks white, but comely;
With children all about thy home,
And clustering at thy knee,—
But ne'er forget how I did roam
The woods, sweetheart, with thee.

LITTLE MAID, PRETTY MAID.

Little maid, pretty maid,
  Walking through the meadow,—
Golden hair in sunny shade,—
  Lightly flies the shadow,
From the clouds high up in air,
  Lightly sailing o'er you ;—
Who's the youth, my pretty fair,
  Saunt'ring on before you?

Little maid, pretty maid,
  I have seen you walking
With that youth in sunny shade ;—
  I have seen you talking—
Talking with your rosy lips,
  Talking with your eyes, too,
Words that were like honey-dips,
  Honey in your sighs, too.

Trip along, pretty maid,
  Tripping o'er the green sward,
Meet your lover in the shade,
  Give him loving kind word ;

Keep your heart all pure in love,
For he loves you truly:
He told you so, you little dove,—
Young hearts are unruly.

Trip along, pretty maid,
You 're longing now to meet him;
Sweet the words he oft has said,
Again you wish to greet him;
Go! and joy be aye with you,
Your heart be never sad, O!
Gold and green and sunny blue,
Care ne'er cast a shadow.

THE MUSIC OF A SWEET SONG.

The music of an old song is singing in my ear,
It is the simple sweet song I oft have sat to hear;
The music of an old song is singing in my heart,
It is the song my Jeannie sang the day that we did part.

I 'll ne'er forget the sweet song sung by my Jeannie fair,
I see her face in every flower—her song rings through the air ;
Her smile is ever in my eye, her love-words in my heart,
They give a joy to all my life, and soothe each bitter smart.

I wait and wish the day may come when Jean shall be my bride
To hear her sing the sweet song while sitting by my side,
When I may gaze into her eyes and fold her to my heart,
And then defy each worldly care, for we no more shall part.

A BALLAD.

The leaves were falling from the tree
All on an Autumn afternoon ;
They fell upon my love and me,
The wind it sang a doleful tune ;
And we walked through the rocking woods
All hand-in-hand together ;
Our lover hearts were warm and true
In the rough windy weather.

We talked as lovers ever do,—
Full foolish though the words might be;
I know that mine were leal and true,
And, oh! her words were dear to me;
We whispered of the coming time,
Of life-long love undying;
And, when we parted, well I mind
The wild rain-clouds were flying.

And we did promise soon to meet,
To talk our sweet love-talk together,
For lovers' hearts will warmly beat
E'en in the coldest Winter weather.
But Fate that weaves life's web did rule
That we ne'er should meet again
To talk sweet love by murmuring stream,
In the wood or in the lane.

My love she sent a note to me,—
And oh, she looked so pale and wan,—
The leaves had all gone off the tree,
The snow was lying on the lawn:
Her words, as ever, full of love,
But her voice was faint and low,
As the rose-blush mantled o'er her cheek
Life's tide there did ebb and flow.

The Winter spent its stormy blast,
The snow it melted off the lea,
But o'er my path a gloom was cast:
For my sweet love was gone from me.
When Nature woke in grassy Spring,
All budding from the hand of God,
When song-birds sweet did love-notes sing,
My darling slept beneath the sod.

THE BASHFUL LOVER.

What shall I say? Shall I tell her I love her?
Oh, what shall I say when I meet Annie Lea?
Her eyes are as blue as the bright sky above her;
Her smile like the dawning of morning to me;
Her cheeks are like roses—
Like sweet-smelling posies;
Her lips like the cherries that hang on the tree.
Oh, what shall I say?
Shall I tell her I love her?
What shall I say
When I meet Annie Lea?

What shall I say?—Is it really my duty
To speak of the charms of her beautiful face?
Or shall I not rather dilate on the beauty
That dwells in her heart, full of tenderest grace?
Her words are so tender—
May all good defend her!
Dear Annie, I dream of none other but thee!
Oh, what shall I say?
Shall I tell her I love her?
What shall I say
When I meet Annie Lea?

What shall I say?—Whenever I meet her,
I forget half the words that I wanted to say!
It is neither of beauty, of grace, nor of duty—
Of cherry-red lips, nor her eyes' tender play;
But, oh! I must tell how
I 'm dying with love now,
And pray her young heart's love be given to me!
Yes!—that 's what I 'll say:
I will tell her I love her—
That 's what I 'll say
When I meet Annie Lea!

TRUE HEARTS.

I saw the maid but yester-night,
That I did love in years gone by;
And, oh! her eyes looked just as bright
As when they made my heart to sigh.

Her cherry lip was just as red,
Her rosy cheek was still as fair;
But something from her voice had fled,
And her sweet smile it told of care.

When tenderly her hand I took,
And spoke of friends and "long ago,"
I felt her slender fingers shook,—
And her soft cheek did blushing glow.

Her voice was low, her words were kind,—
And we went back to early days,
When all we cared to seek or find
Was circled round with golden rays.

When last we parted, each did feel
That each had done the other wrong,
And each did try the heart to steel,
By mingling in the busy throng.

But now——Ah! yester-night we met,
And our two hearts beat true as true;
I said, "Why not be happy yet!"
And she—"My heart is aye with you!"

BALLAD.

I HAVE left my love there lying
On her death-bed, dying, dying!
The wild storm-clouds fast are flying
Now o'er my way!
Oh, shall we never, never more
Go through the wood, or by the shore
Wander as in glad time of yore
In the bright day?

Now the wild storm-wind is sighing,
And the wild storm-clouds are flying,
And the day in tempest dying
On land and wave;
Oh, shall we never meet again
By woody glade or in the lane,
And sing our love in simple strain,
All true and brave?

My love may in the grave lie sleeping,—
Oh, my heart is sad and weeping,
And the midnight vigils keeping
O'er her so fair.
The grave may wrap her body round,
Deep, deep down in the hallowed ground,
Where ne'er shall come nor sigh nor sound
To harm her there.

Tho' the wild storm-wind is sighing,—
Withered leaves are wildly flying,—
Wintry day, in tempest dying,
On land and shore.
Yet will I wait, and constant be
Until the time shall come for me
When I again her face may see,
And part no more.

LET ME HEAR YOU LAUGH.

Oh, let me hear you laugh, Mary!
Oh, let me hear you sing!
Oh, let me hear your merry voice
Through all the garden ring!
The air is full of melody—
Glad song-birds, on the wing,
Will pause amid their airy flight
To hear my Mary sing.

Oh, never may a thought of pain
E'er fill thy heart with sighs;
Oh, never fall dark Sorrow's cloud
In tear-drops from thine eyes!
For youth should be a happy time—
Bright, sunny as the May,
When birds are singing in the bush,
And lambs are all at play!

Then, let me hear you laugh, Mary;
There is no other sound
Hath half the music to my ear
In all the world around:

There is no other melody
In lute or in the grove,
O happy as the silvery laugh
Of the sweet voice I love!

Then, let me hear you laugh, Mary,
And let me hear you sing;
I love to hear the merry voice
Through house and garden ring!
It drives away the heavy thought,
And sunshine round me clings;
For nought on earth would I resign
What Mary's laughter brings!

IT 'S CAULD! CAULD!

It 's cauld to hear the wintry storm
Scouring o'er the bleak hill-side,
Or tearing down the woody glen,
Or roaring o'er the foaming tide!

It 's cauld to face the beating rain—
The bitter, biting frost and snaw,
The driving sleet and hurricane,
That frae the fierce wild north does blaw.

It 's cauld to lie on sair sick-bed,
Wi' nae kind voice to whisper near you :
Wi' nae kind hand to wipe your brow,
An' gin you sigh, wi' nane to hear you !

But caulder than the cauldest wind,
Or keenest blast that ever blew,
Is the cauld, cauld o' the lanely heart,
When dearest friend has proved untrue.

I 'm sitting by the cauld hearth-stane,—
Nae genial spark o' love is there ;
For all I held most sacred—dear,
Has left me bowed and crushed wi' care.

Oh, never in this world again—
Oh, never in this world for me—
Can gladness warm this cauld, cauld heart,
Or wipe the salt tear frae my e'e.

The happy days that hae been mine,
Bright, sunny hours, for ever gone!
Warm, honied words no more to hear—
It breaks my heart to think upon.

Oh, caulder than the cauldest wind,
Or keenest blast that ever blew,
Is the cauld, cauld o' the lanely heart,
When dearest friend has proved untrue.

WILL HE NEVER COME BACK AGAIN?

Will he never come back again, again?
Will he never come back to me?
Am I never again, in joy or pain,
My ain true lover to see?

Oh, the leaves fall fast in the grassy grove,
And the cloud pours forth its rain,
And fast fall my tears for that fond love
I never may see again.

Oh, I sit in my bower alane, alane!
I sit and gaze over the sea,—
And think of my love that 's gane, ah! gane
Sae far, far away frae me.

Will he never come back again, again?
Will he never come back to me?
Am I never again, in joy or pain,
My ain true lover to see?

EIDER-DOWN.

Young Kitty was the neatest girl
In all our little town,
Her bonnet trimmed with pink and pearl,
Her cloak of velvet brown;
All round her pretty neck,—dear sir,
Ah! prithee, do not frown,—
She wore a cosy muffler
Made of the eider-down.

Young Kitty's cheek was rosy red,
Her eyes were hazel grey,
And prettily the dimples spread
That round her mouth did play;
Her silvery laugh and sunny smile
Did other beauties crown,
And then her little chin the while
Did rest in eider-down.

And when I whispered words of love
Into her willing ear,
Her fingers through mine gently wove
Did banish all my fear;
Then, oh! the love-light in her eye
Was beautiful to see,
And, though it made my heart to sigh,
It was a joy to me.

And all her words were soft and sweet,
As her young face was fair;
When she walked down our drowsy street
The people all would stare.
Kate jilted me, and off she ran!—
'T was known through all the town:—
I wonder if that soldier man
Admired the eider-down?

'T WAS A LOVER AND HIS LASS.

'T was a lover and his lass,
Oh, they sat upon the grass,
And they looked into each other's eyes so clear,—
Then each other's lips they pressed,
And each other's hands caressed,
As he whispered tender words into her ear;
Then the maiden hung her head,
And the mantling blushes spread,
And the glad light sparkled beaming in her eye;
When, with a whispered "Yes,"
Which slipped out between a kiss,
She promised to be his for ever aye.

Sweet, sweet the simple song,
The Summer woods among,
That is breathed into a maiden's willing ear;
Oh, it makes the heart to swell
With a joy no words can tell,
And a true love for her lover fond and dear;
And the lover loves to hear
The sweet soft sound in his ear,

Whispering, "Yes! yes! dearest, I do love you true;"
Oh, then with manly pride
He will press her to his side,
And vow the vow he never more shall rue.

There's a joy in having gold
Which cannot well be told,
There's a joy in having rich broad lands to till
There's a joy in having wealth,
As there is in having health,
But these many joys the heart can never fill:
Yet there is one bliss alone
That for all ills can atone,
Oh, and with it every other joy is wove;
For the world may smile or scorn,
If our life we can adorn
With the sweet smile of the dear girl that we love.

MY OWN ANNIE.

Now I am far away from thee—
Far over land and far over sea—
Oh, dost thou ever think of me,
My sweet Annie?

I see thee now in vision's dream,
As last I saw thee down by the stream,
When we did part without one gleam
Of hope, Annie.

A heavy sadness o'er me fell:
Then, I could not speak to say "Farewell!"
Nor all the words I wished to tell
To thee, Annie.

Oh, with a heavy heart and sore,
Lest I, love, should never see thee more,
The good ship bore me from the shore
And thee, Annie.

Now as the sun sinks in the deep,
And comrades round me lie all asleep,
My heart doth constant vigils keep
O'er thee, Annie.

And I do sit and dream of time
When I may leave this far, far-off clime,
My native hills again to climb
With thee, Annie.

To hear the well-remembered song:
To hear thee laughing the trees among;
Thy smile—its memory cheers the long,
Long years, Annie.

Though Time with tardy wing flies on,
Hope whispers soft—"When the years are gone,"
Then I again shall gaze upon
Thy face, Annie.

And when the thund'ring battle's roar,
Raging, shall here be heard no more:
When this sad deadly strife is o'er,
My love, Annie;

Then will I, hastening homeward, flee
Over the rough, wild, tempestuous sea,
On to my well-loved home and thee,
My sweet Annie!

But now I 'm far away from thee,
In distant lands far across the sea—
I, ever yearning, think of thee,
My own Annie!

A WEDDING SONG.

A BOAT went sailing out to sea,
Out to sea, out to sea,—
A boat went sailing out to sea
All on a sunny morning;
And in it sat a fair ladie:
Oh, she was young and blithe to see!
A wreath of flowers from orange tree
Her fair young brow adorning.

And by her sat a gallant youth,
A gallant youth, a gallant youth,
And by her sat a gallant youth
On that bright, sunny morning.
Now they were bound with silken string;
He decked her finger with a ring;
The bells rang out, the birds did sing
All joy on the sunny morning!

And so this youth and fair ladie,
Fair ladie, fair ladie,
Went sailing on the world's wide sea
On Life's gay sunny morning.
He sheltered her when waves ran high,
He wiped the tear-drop from her eye,
And kept the holy vow for aye
He made on the sunny morning.

And thus they sailed right o'er the sea,
O'er the sea, o'er the sea;
Happy they sailed right o'er the sea
In Life's bright sunny morning;
And when they reached the far-off shore
They anchored boat to sail no more,
And heralds met, who welcome bore
To the land of the brighter morning.

WHAT WAS IT STOLE MY HEART AWAY?

What was it stole my heart away,
When I was nothing dreaming,—
As we walked out on Summer day,
The sunlight brightly gleaming?
Oh, Kitty's eyes! so soft and blue—
Young Kitty's heart, so warm and true—
What could I say—what could I do—
When Kitty's eyes were beaming?

Young Kitty stole my heart away:
'T was like a fairy's dealing;
Her eyes did dance and sparkling play,
Bewitching every feeling.
As we walked down the woody glade—
Now in the sunlight, now in shade—
Her merry voice sweet music made,
Wild love-thoughts o'er me stealing!

Across the stile, and through the wood,
Where bright bluebells were beaming;
Her sweet words swept on like a flood
Of silver water streaming:
They filled my ear, they filled my heart,
And made me wish we ne'er might part;
Then through my brain did fancies dart,
That made me dream, 't was dreaming!

Thus on we walked, through meadow green,—
Aud still I wandered dreaming—
Through woody copse and bramble screen,
To where the brook was streaming;
There, 'mid the babbling music made,
Some strange, wild words I, muttering, said:
Young Kitty blushed as half afraid,—
And still I felt 't was dreaming.

Again the brook went singing by,
Again the sunlight gleaming;
Again my pleading suit I try—
Quick, hurried words out-teeming;
And then I heard, with raptured bliss,
Sweet Kitty, blushing, whispers—"Yes."
We sealed the vow with kiss for kiss—
Ah, that was more than dreaming!

BONNY NAN.

All young and fair,
And light as air,
My bonny Nan, when first we met,
The world did seem
Like fairy dream,
And I go dreaming of thee yet.

There 's nothing here
The heart to cheer,
And drive the darkening cloud away,—
Compared the while
With thy sweet smile—
My bonny Nan, my light of day!

Oh, my sweet Nan!
Since world began,
There never was a maid so fair!
And I maintain
That, ne'er again
Will there be one that can compare

In simple grace
And lovely face,
In heart so kind and loving true :
Her eyes they glow,
They melt and flow—
Like violets is their deepest blue.

Yes, I can tell
How it befell
That my sweet Nan bewitchèd me ;
Her soft blue eye
Let sparkles fly ;
Her honied words were kind and free.

With guileless art
She won my heart,
Which all too willing ne'er shall rue ;
My love shall bide,
Whate'er betide,
And to my Nan be leal and true !

TOO SANGUINE.

WHAT a queer, queer thing is this life, to be sure!
Like seasons, with all their queer changing:
The glad Summer we love, the Winter endure—
A tear with a smile ever ranging.
Cold rain-drops will fall in the sunniest day,
Each sweet has its own drop of sorrow;
But now I resolve to cast care all away,
For I 'm to be married to-morrow!
Hi! ho! let the time go!
From Summer its sunshine I 'll borrow;
And this one thing I say,
I 'll be glad every day!—
Oh, I 'm to be married to-morrow!

What a queer, queer thing is this life, to be sure!
When a girl I was merry and singing;
But now I 'm a woman, I 've grown more demure,
And I think of the marriage-bells ringing.

Though I comb back my hair and I look all so prim,
My heart shall ne'er harbour a sorrow;
I know that my joy shall be full to the brim,
For I 'm to be married to-morrow!
Hi! ho! let the time go!
From Summer its sunshine I 'll borrow;
Now my heart is so glad,
I shall never be sad—
Oh, I 'm to be married to-morrow!

I know that this world is a very queer place,
And many queer people live in it;
But we all might have more of its sunniest face,
If we only would try just to win it.
I 'm determined to try it, let come now what may!
My husband shall never hear sighing;
And I 'm sure I shall prove then, whate'er you may say,
That good 's to be had for the trying.
Hi! ho! let care-time go!
Let us banish away dull sorrow;
For my tears ne'er shall flow
When I 'm married, you know—
And I 'm to be married to-morrow!

SONG TO AUTUMN.

Rich Autumn comes, all smiling and free,
Laden with fruits from the vine and tree;
He fills up our horn full of barley and corn,
For those who would gather the rich reward;
Then roughly he blows o'er the land as he goes,
And withered leaves lie on the greensward.

Mellow old Autumn!—so rich and rude—
That scatters the bad and keeps the good,
And too often, alas! doth bring it to pass,
As he blusters and blows, without regard
To the poor and the low, sore weeping and woe,
And yellow leaves lie on the greensward.

Autumn profuse in his kindly cheer,
He scatters good gifts both far and near;
With his brow all so bold, both cheery and cold,
He provides for the platter and tankard;—
Then, good, cheery, old soul, he lets the time roll,
And withered leaves lie on the greensward.

Christmas comes, all bold and free:
Berries on the holly,
The laurel and the stout yule tree
Blazing up so jolly!
Friends that may be parted wide,
Now do meet together;
The love that glows at Christmas-tide
Scorns the wintry weather.

Merry is the Christmas-time!
Merry are its prances!
Merry jest and cunning rhyme,
And the merry dances!
Drinking from the wassail-bowl,
Greet him as he passes;
Give Christmas-time a merry troll,
Merry maids and lasses!

CHRISTMAS EVE.

HERE, musing by the warm firelight,
The evening of this Christmas Day,
I feel how time, with rapid flight,
Bears many dear-loved friends away.
Around my hearth as Christmas fell,
Friends, old and young, together came;
But now, alas! 't is mine to tell,
Old Christmas Day is not the same:
Instead of merry laughing eyes,
That joy and youthful gladness bore,
Here, sitting now, I hear the sighs
Of breakers beating on the shore.
Well, merry sounds must pass away,
And sighs may close life's fitful day.

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